

# *The* CLEARING HOUSE

A JOURNAL FOR MODERN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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Vol. 34

NOVEMBER 1959

No. 3

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The School Crisis: Chevlin Heights  
Meets the Challenge

*by* JOHN F. OHLES

Do We Need a "National Curriculum"?  
A Conference Report

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A Dynamic Eighth Grade . . . What's Wrong with Essay Contests? . . . The  
High-School Library as a Curriculum Material Center . . . Some Key Sources  
of Error in Test Administration . . . Interior Marks of Great Teachers

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# The Clearing House

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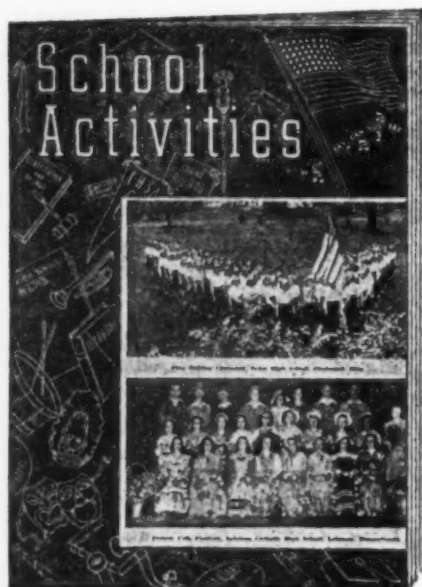
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# A DYNAMIC EIGHTH GRADE

By CHARLES R. KELLER

EDUCATORS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC should note the exciting, new developments in the eighth grade of a number of schools throughout the country. Not all at once but step by step, not in many schools but in a few, curricular changes are occurring which make it possible—and necessary—to write about a dynamic eighth grade.

These curricular changes have come quite rapidly, the result of the Advanced Placement Program; of the work of groups such as the College Board's commission on mathematics, the Modern Language Association, and various science and English organizations; and of critical, constructive thinking and acting by individual teachers and administrators. In general, a dynamic eighth grade, where it exists, has stemmed from pressure from above—from significant developments in the twelfth, eleventh, tenth, and ninth grades.

The curricular changes began before Sputnik I was launched and do not flow from the new American interest in keeping up with the Russians rather than with the Joneses. They reflect a concern for quality rather than quantity in education. Although not all students can do the work, a larger percentage of the student body than expected appears ready for significant educational advances.

As has been said, schools did not add all the elements of a dynamic eighth grade at one time; a number of schools still have only one or two of these elements.

In English, teachers have begun to realize that students should read fewer and

better pieces of literature than they have been reading. Broad coverage and pure narration are being questioned; an emphasis on depth and elementary analysis is appearing. Students like to read good literature. They also like to write the short papers which even harassed teachers are assigning. Perhaps team teaching and non-professional readers will shortly be parts of eighth-grade procedures in at least a few schools.

All too frequently in the past the study of foreign languages has begun in the ninth grade. All too frequently the ineffective and wasteful pattern in grades nine through twelve has been two years of one foreign language and two years of another. Today in many schools the study of foreign languages in the elementary way, with emphasis on only the spoken and listened-to language, is begun before the eighth grade—in the fourth grade, for instance. There has been insufficient evaluation of, and considerable disagreement about, these procedures.

Foreign language study as part of a dynamic eighth grade, however, rouses little or no opposition. With new methods of teaching, the study of at least one foreign language in the eighth grade has led to increased student interest and proficiency in the foreign languages. Frequently, the study of a foreign language, begun in the eighth grade, is continued through the twelfth grade, with the Advanced Placement Program and the possibility of college credit and advanced placement a powerful stimulant.

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 EDITOR'S NOTE

*Here is a much-needed overview of newer developments in strengthening the educational fare in grade 8. It makes no difference what type of school organization houses this grade—three-year junior high school, six-year junior-senior high school, eight-year elementary school—for the program can prosper under enlightened leadership wherever it is. Of course, this article has particular significance for the junior high school since more than 55 per cent of youth in grades 7 and 8 is enrolled in the junior high school.*

*The author is currently director of the John Hay Fellows Program. Previously he was director of the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board, 1955-57, and before that director of admissions and professor at Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. In his varied assignments, he has visited secondary schools in all sections of the country and has been in demand as a speaker and writer on the historical backgrounds of American secondary education.*

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Many people, concerned about the quality of much eighth-grade arithmetic, welcome the reappearance of algebra in the eighth grade. They are convinced that many students have lost interest in mathematics when, instead of moving rapidly from one mastered step to the next, they hear something of this sort, "Johnny, you know the subject so well that you may do twenty problems instead of the regular ten." The modern Johnny simply does not respond.

To a certain extent the Advanced Placement Program is responsible for the introduction of algebra into the eighth grade—or rather its reintroduction, for not long ago for many students algebra was an eighth-grade subject. With calculus and analytic geometry in the twelfth grade (college-level work under the Advanced Placement Program), considerable rethinking of high-

school mathematics ensued. Algebra in the eighth grade for some students, at least, was one of the results. Not just the traditional algebra is being taught. Both content and teaching methods are being modified.

A change in the ninth-grade science offering has significantly altered and strengthened science programs in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades as well as in the eighth grade. In a number of schools biology is now a ninth-grade subject, with chemistry in the tenth grade, physics in the eleventh grade, and Advanced Placement Program work in one of the sciences—or two or three of them—in the twelfth grade.

With biology in the ninth grade, the final year of general science is given in the eighth grade. The emphasis must be on quality, not quantity; on understanding, not coverage. Teachers must not try to cover in two years everything that was previously done in three years. They must select the most important points and follow the principle of "strength through depth." They can prove that some of the best and most effective teaching occurs before a class begins, when teachers decide what they will include and what they will omit.

The eighth-grade subject in which the least new, creative thinking has been done is American history. But there are schools in which the traditional course has been questioned and new ideas introduced. The subject and the intellectual discipline in American history are retained, but the idea of coverage and of just plain fact gathering is challenged. Student interest, knowledge with understanding, and training of the mind are stressed. Whenever possible the course should begin with the history of the place where the student is situated, the history of the home town or city or area. Then should follow a course in American history, with careful selection of topics and periods covered—selection based on the teacher's own interests and capabilities.

Mature English, a foreign language, algebra, the second and final year in general

science, and a course which might be called "Studies in American History," these *in toto* or in part, with music, art, and physical training, well done, constitute a new, dynamic eighth grade in some schools for

some students. The emphasis is on quality; the idea of coverage is abandoned. Teachers have challenging experiences. Students think while they learn and learn while they think.

### A "Product" or a "Student"?

Woodrow Wilson and the Democratic party came into office in the election of 1912 promising a "New Freedom" to the American people. This was to be a freedom from a philosophy which reduced all things, human and inhuman, to commerce.

To create this "New Freedom" the Democrats and Wilson pushed through significant legislation from 1913 through 1916: the Federal Reserve Act, the Federal Trade Commission Act, the Keating-Owen Child Labor Law, and the Clayton Act. It was one of the intentions of the Clayton Act to remove laboring people from the category, "articles of commerce," and thus to remove the organizations of laboring people from the restraint of trade provisions of the anti-trust laws. In Section Six of the Clayton Act we read "that the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce." We still talk sometimes about labor as if it were something other than human, but at least the Federal Government has put in its caveat.

However, for students, not even a gesture has been made. In speech after speech we hear about the educational "product"; in article after article, authors analyze the quality and quantity of the educational "product." A newspaper article of a few weeks back quoted an observer of the present scene as saying: "If this trend continues, in 15 to 20 years you can see that we will have in college—inadequately trained teachers turning out inadequately trained products." No doubt many of the people who use this term are full of human sympathy and mean no harm to students, even as the old-time employer of children was able to convince himself and others that the words "useful and productive activity" was an adequate synonym for "child labor."

To be sure, the economist talks about the supply of and demand for labor. However, he is using the word "labor" as a hypothetical model of reality. For the economic scientist to treat labor as a thing to be analyzed is as scientifically defensible as looking at man as an organism, as the biologist does, or as a collection of atoms and molecules, as the physicist does. However, the biologist does not look on his students or his children or his wife as organisms, nor does he call them organisms in letters, speeches, or everyday conversation; nor does the physicist think of humans always as complex systems of molecules. Perhaps the observer of the educational scene, when he habitually uses the word "product" for "students" or "graduates," feels he is also being scientific. But the economist, the biologist, and physicist have a definite, disinterested, theoretical model which needs clarifying in the interests of knowledge for its own sake; the usual use of the words, "educational product," is in propagandistic or policy documents where science is not the object.

The persons who continually use the term "product" to talk about students are betraying an attitude toward life which is extremely materialistic, and they are engaged in a vulgarization of the science of economics and its terminology.

Perhaps it is silly to quibble about whether it is proper to use the term "product" for "students" and/or "graduates," but I still would like a Clayton Act for students. Unless the students get this needed legislation, then the next things we might be hearing in our culture will be: "Was your blessed event a male 'product' or a female 'product'?"—ROBERT M. BJORK in the *Peabody Journal of Education*.

# The High-School Library as a Curriculum Material Center

By  
JOHN J. FARLEY

AT THE FIRST FACULTY MEETING of the year, the new audio-visual co-ordinator at a New Jersey high school was introduced to his colleagues. Asked to say a few words about his proposed A-V program, he began, "My area will be the learning that takes place through seeing and hearing. . . ."

At this point, a crusty old veteran of twenty-six years in the classroom muttered cynically in my ear, "Good. The rest of us will worry about the learning that takes place through smelling."

Actually, this A-V man was a pretty competent fellow, and he didn't mean to lay claim to as broad a field as his opening remarks seemed to indicate, but they do bring up the question of just what an audio-visual specialist is supposed to spe-

cialize in. Since the administration of audio-visual education is a relatively new field, there is still a great deal of vagueness about what it entails.

One concept of the A-V man's job, and a fairly common one, would have him in charge of films, filmstrips, slides, records, and tapes, together with the equipment necessary for use of them. Surely this notion is such a narrow one that it would hardly justify the presence of a full-time audio-visual expert on the staff of any but the very largest high schools.

The trend in the audio-visual field seems instead to be in the direction of general instructional materials service.

The materials used in teaching and learning are today so many and so varied that no teacher can know all about them, even in his own field, much less attempt to acquire, handle, and store them efficiently for classroom use. They comprise not only the usual audio-visual materials but maps, globes, charts, pictures, prints, models, posters, and textbooks. Even the people and places in the community can be used as instructional aids. So can commercial motion pictures and radio and television programs. There is also the vast store of free and inexpensive sponsored materials available to every teacher, a surprising number of them of very high quality. And there are, best of all, books. Not only textbooks but library books, supplementary classroom books, magazines, pamphlets, paperbacks.

Someone is needed in the school who will be an instructional materials expert, not just a film-and-record man. The instructional materials specialist should be

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Who is the logical person on the secondary-school staff to manage—that is, to acquire, handle, store, and distribute—such learning helps as audio-visual materials, maps, globes, charts, pictures, prints, models, posters, resource books, and inexpensive sponsored materials? Is it the A-V expert, curriculum consultant, director of instruction, librarian, or some other staff member?*

*The author has answered these questions and his suggestions seem to make sense. Whether you agree with him depends upon whom you have in your school with the prescribed characteristics specified by the writer. He is curriculum specialist, Sewanhaka Central High School District, Floral Park, New York, and lecturer in Queens College, New York City.*

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an audio-visual expert on the side but should range much more widely and be concerned with all of the materials that can aid and improve teaching and learning. He would, incidentally, be an *ex officio* member of every curriculum committee.

It is my belief that the person who is best qualified for such service in the high school is the top-notch librarian.

Many librarians turn an attractive shade of purple when anyone suggests broadening the scope of their duties, and perhaps they have good cause. They're usually bogged down with so much clerical work and so little assistance that they despair of ever getting their real professional duties accomplished. But actually only the librarian (the real librarian, not the one who is, in every sense of the word, a bookkeeper) has the training, the experience, and the broad grasp of the high-school curriculum that are necessary for good materials service. The "audio-visual expert" usually doesn't. He is overspecialized. He is concerned with only a few kinds of instructional materials, and not necessarily the most important ones, and if he has had any training in his field it has usually been too narrow.

What is needed is a person who is familiar with all instructional materials, not an electronics engineer. The school librarian has been trained to know the sources and the values of all kinds of learning materials, including visual aids. He may not know the intricacies of projection and recording equipment, but he doesn't need to. This is a custodial and not a professional function. What he needs to know about the equipment he can learn easily.

Accepting the librarian as the school's instructional materials expert would in-

volve some changes in the usual concept of the school library, but some changes in this concept are long overdue anyway. The high-school library should be a curriculum materials center. All of the school's resources for learning should be there, including audio-visual materials. It should be a learning and information center for students and faculty. A teacher or student gathering material on a given unit of knowledge shouldn't need to visit library, textbook office, audio-visual center, and then try the local phone book for sources of aid. All of these sources should be at the fingertips of one person in the school, and the logical fingertips are the librarian's. If we were to accept this concept of library service we might eventually make the library what librarians have wistfully been hoping for years it might become, "the heart of the school."

It would give the librarian a chance to put his real competencies at the service of faculty and students, and lift him out of the status of study-hall monitor and clerk. It would enhance his case for more professional and clerical aid. It would possibly even free him from the burden of giving "library instruction," a time-consuming job that is better done by the classroom teacher, but which the classroom teacher prefers to have done by the librarian so that the teacher can brighten his day with a cigarette and coffee.

A school which is fortunate enough to have a really professional librarian and a halfway decent budget can go far in the improvement of instruction by centralizing all curriculum materials in the library. Such a school is not only increasing its administrative efficiency but is making the job of good teaching easier.



# What's Wrong with Essay Contests?

By NORMA R. MILLER

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH ESSAY CONTESTS? We had them when I was in school." Mr. Jordan had come in to offer the local high school an essay contest. The conversation had been cordial, but now, facing the principal across his desk, Jordan could scarcely conceal his annoyance.

"What's wrong with an activity that gets youngsters to dig up information on this important subject—with something that helps them to learn to think and to express themselves? Aren't these educational objectives?"

"Indeed they are, Mr. Jordan," Mr. MacFarland agreed with a patient sigh, "but in addition to the aims of a contest, there are a number of other factors which must be considered in evaluating it as an educational activity. Our faculty committee just last year went into this subject. After much

discussion, they decided that it was best if we did not use classroom time writing essays for contests of the kind you outline. It might interest you to know that you are not the only group that has approached us. We are, in fact besieged by organizations and manufacturers, both local and national, who would like to sponsor essay contests in our school."

"I certainly didn't realize that," said Mr. Jordan, relaxing a little in his chair. "I can see that would cause a problem of selecting which ones to use and which ones to ignore, but tell me, what are some of these other factors that have to be considered?"

"Well, we feel that the activity required of the contestant should be educational. In this case, writing an essay is, of course, something we use in school in teaching English and other subjects. But much of the value to the students comes from working with the teacher to analyze, criticize, rewrite, and improve their work. If a teacher or a parent offers this kind of help to a contestant in an essay contest, the touchy ethical question arises as to whether the essay is really being completely written by the contestant. If the student writes it entirely on his own and sends it in, he never receives the benefit of any constructive criticism."

"Yes, I see," said Mr. Jordan thoughtfully. "If he writes it on his own out of school, there would always be the temptation to copy from books or papers that say it better than he could."

"That's a point too, Mr. Jordan. Although we do not think that our students tend to be dishonest, this type of a contest presents certain kinds of temptations."

"The question came up at our committee meeting of whether we should have the contest for both grade-school and high-

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*A one-word answer to this question is "Plenty." Not only are essay contests often unimaginatively conceived but they also are born to be a nuisance to pupils, teachers, and administrators because they are usually imposed on the school by outside pressure. It is amazing how many essay-contest sponsors want to use the schools to achieve their own ends. Because of this situation, school systems have resisted foisting responsibility for essay contests on already heavily burdened teachers of English. Further, some of them have a stated policy approved by the board of education, one example of which is the Milwaukee public schools.*

*The author is director of the Washington office of Glick and Lorwin, Inc., of New York and formerly was a speech instructor in secondary schools in Pennsylvania and at the University of Pittsburgh.*

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school students, or to limit it somewhat. We never did settle it." Mr. Jordan ended on a questioning note.

"The whole subject of eligibility, of course, is a broad one. We do feel that it is unfair to place youngsters in direct competition with adults who have had more education and experience. The same goes for elementary and high-school students. If you wanted to include both in a contest, it calls for two separate divisions with different criteria for judging. This wouldn't apply in your case, of course, but there are groups who wish to make other groups ineligible on grounds of race, color, or creed. Many manufacturers want contestants to send in box tops."

"Really," replied Jordan in surprised tones, "That sounds too commercial to me."

"Well, it is, of course, but I suppose manufacturers are so used to requiring box tops in contests outside of schools that it seems reasonable. To us it represents a limitation on eligibility—it limits the contests to users of certain products or those who can afford to buy."

"Well, I can see that there is a lot more to this subject than we ever realized. You mentioned the criteria for judging; that is another problem that bothered us in our meetings. The essay subject is one on which people have strong opinions. They are entitled to them, of course, but I am not certain that they can always keep these opinions from influencing their judgment. Certain individuals also, because of their position in our organization, would have to be represented on the judging committee. These may not be the most objective."

"As a matter of fact, you have hit on another of the chief reasons we steer clear of essay contests. I might add that very few people I talk to about contests are as willing to face up to this problem as you are. Judges most acceptable to schools are those not only expert in the subject matter but those with a background and understanding in mod-

ern educational methods. It is not uncommon for contest sponsors these days to include educators among the judges. Policies differ, but many school people are permitted to serve in such posts and many are willing to do so. We have never had a faculty member invited to be a judge, and consequently have not yet set a policy on it."

"I notice you mentioned you had a faculty committee. Does this committee officially accept and reject contests for your school?"

"The purpose of our committee is primarily to go over the vast number of contest announcements that come in and call the good ones to the attention of teachers and students who might be interested. Our school board leaves the decision entirely up to us, but it is not true in all school districts. Some systems have official committees at city, county, or even state levels which compile lists of approved contests. No others are then permitted in the schools. There is one national list also, compiled each year by a committee of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals. This lists nationwide contests which meet their approved educational standards. Many principals use this list as a guide; I do myself. But there are still numerous local contests we must decide about."

"I suppose sponsors all try to get on these lists?"

"Some do and some don't. The more successful contests—ones which fully meet the educational requirements—have most likely been brought to the attention of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals and to the attention of local listing committees."

"We were considering offering a tuition scholarship to City College for first prize. I assume that is acceptable."

"Perfectly. However, if you gave the winner some choice of educational institution, you would broaden the interest base and increase participation."

"That would certainly be possible—providing, of course, we go through with the contest idea at all, now that essays are out," Jordan added.

Mr. MacFarland watched Mr. Jordan as he gathered his thoughts. He liked this man's realistic approach to the problem and he wanted to be as helpful as possible. "I believe we've covered all the important reasons why contests, not just essay contests, may be rejected by the schools," Mr. MacFarland said. "Of course, we occasionally get an announcement of a contest which offers educational values but which has such complicated entrance requirements and rules that it becomes unworkable. Occasionally, too, a contest makes unreasonable demands on the teacher's professional time, such as requiring her to screen hundreds of entries before forwarding the top half dozen to the sponsor, but these are the exceptions."

"I feel I've already taken too much of your time," said Mr. Jordan, moving toward the edge of his chair—"but I have one final question, and I'd like you to give me a straight answer: Do you think we should give up the idea of a school contest altogether?"

"That's really a tough one, Mr. Jordan, but perhaps I can answer it this way: If you can develop a contest which fits in with our curriculum, which actively helps teachers to do some of the things they are already trying to do, then I am sure it would appeal to many of our teachers. The final decision as to whether to participate is up to the individual teachers, of course, so I can't speak for them. However, our teachers and students do participate in a number of contests which they feel serve useful purposes. Each one is completely unique in what it does. I'd be glad to let you look over some of the literature about them if you decide to go on with this."

"Thank you, I'd appreciate looking them over," said Mr. Jordan, rising from his chair. "Perhaps we can't make a decision until after we have studied these and other contests in more detail. I certainly appreciate your taking the time to discuss this with me. I feel now we really have sound information to guide us when we take up the subject again at the next meeting."

"You're entirely welcome," replied Mr. MacFarland as he accompanied Mr. Jordan to the door; "I appreciate the fact that you came in to talk it over with me."



## Meeting the Needs of All Pupils

For the most part, our high schools are still tied to a formal and classical curriculum intended to prepare students for college, although half the entering students never remain to graduate, and of those who do graduate, four out of five do not go to college. In the old days, a student might have rebelled against the curriculum, but he at least had the mental capacity to wrestle with it. Many of our present high school students are unable to do that. To ask students with I.Q.s of 80, 90 and even 100 to struggle with physics, chemistry and Latin is cruel. To tell them that if they study hard and conscientiously, they too, like their more fortunately endowed classmates, can pass with honors is to tell them a lie. For, by and large, no matter

how hard they study, they will emerge as failures.

If we wish to create a high school to serve all our young people, we have to institute fundamental reforms. Of late, we've been hearing a great deal of talk that these non-academic students should be kept out of school. This is a most unfortunate proposal, most undemocratic and reactionary. Because a young person cannot master a formal academic curriculum does not mean that he is uneducable; that he ought to be sent into a factory. It simply means he needs another kind of education. And it is the educator's task and duty to devise an education that has meaning and purpose for all our children and all our young people.—SAMUEL TENENBAUM in the *Educational Forum*.

# The Casebook of Counselor Crane

By ALVIN W. HOWARD

I HAVE BEEN OBSERVING with considerable interest the recent upsurge of attention given to counseling. No secondary school now is complete without at least one counselor, generally several, and they are bright, well-trained young people equipped with a wealth of tests, techniques, materials, and paraphernalia. It takes me back several years to the Model T era of counseling when the problems were tough and the know-how was structured in the field by rule of thumb. In scanning the bulging pages of my casebook, I came across this example:

## "The Problem of the Boy Who Had No Problem"

I uncovered this one while handling the routine counseling of incoming seventh graders to our junior high. In the course of a busy day of interviews, allaying fears, building security, planning for college, and working with personality adjustments, I came at last to Norville. He was an ordinary-looking sort of boy; one could detect nothing unusual at first glance.

"Well," I asked cheerfully, "how are you getting on? Everything going well? Any

problems I can help you with? After all, that's what I'm here for."

I smiled at him in a kindly manner; well we know the fears a new seventh grader has in the first few days of junior high.

He looked me straight in the eye and said that everything was fine.

How often we see the automatic response to cover some deep-seated fear or frustration; so, mentally rolling up my sleeves, I buckled down to work and attempted to pull out Norville's problems, drag them out where we could look at them, recognize them for what they were, and having recognized, overcome them.

But the boy was difficult. He liked the school. He liked his classes. He liked his fellow students and he liked his teachers.

I began to perspire. All I had learned was in jeopardy. I could remember dear old Dr. Holtz booming at us in Guidance 521, "Everyone has a problem. Our job is to help them overcome it."

I tried again. Norville was on excellent terms with his father and mother. He was extremely proud of his younger sister and admired his older brother. I could detect no signs of rejection, sibling rivalry, jealousy, or frustration.

I took off my coat. The room was becoming unusually warm. The boy looked at me trustingly. Naturally. I was his counselor.

He liked the town, he loved the climate, he thought the country around was wonderful.

I loosened my tie.

He had an adequate allowance, a normal interest in sports, and a normal disinterest in girls.

My mind was reeling. There *must* be a problem here somewhere. I sent the boy out, and all that day I pondered. The next

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Wouldn't it be interesting for a much-counseled student to write on "Counselors I Have Known"? And perhaps just as interesting would be a confession-type piece by a counselor on "Counselees I Have Known." This article exaggerates a counselor's quest for information on the problems of a student who apparently had no problems. Well, it's all in the realm of banter, and we think that it reads well. The author is principal of Fairhaven Junior School, Bellingham, Washington.*

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day I talked with his teachers. They showed me his grades and sociometric ratings. He was a better than average student, well accepted, with three mutual choices.

I seemed to be face to face with dark disaster. What kind of counselor could I call myself? Here was a boy who was as entitled to my services as any other youngster in the school, and I could do nothing for him.

Suddenly a ray of hope shone through. Supposing he should ever want to be school song leader? Our song leaders are and have always been girls. *He could not succeed here!*

I sent for the boy. Delicately I swung the conversation around to song leaders. I was casual in describing the fun, the excitement that fell to their lot. His beady eyes brightened. The thought took hold. Then I dropped my bomb. *He was not a girl* and, therefore, could never hold this office. I tell you, friends, the next few minutes would

have gladdened the heart of any counselor. His face fell, tears came to his eyes. I went to work, I comforted, I explained that this was only one of many frustrations that life would have for him. I was at my best, magnificent. I even choked up a little myself.

He left me and I leaned back in my chair and reflected. There is *something* we can do for everyone, even the boy who had no problem. (This case had an interesting epilogue the following year when Norville led a student movement which changed the policy on song leaders to permit a boy to hold this position. Norville was the first boy to have the honor of being the school song leader.)

Well, there you have it. A sample of what we early workers on the firing line had to contend with. I like to think that the bit we did, small though it may have been, contributed a little toward the tremendous things our counselors do today.

## The Tumult and Shouting

Again, the educational "experts" are enjoying a field day. Schools and youth are getting a working-over. The "experts" range from Generals with ideas to hack writers eager for a fast buck, interspersed with persons from all walks of life sincerely eager to improve the nation's educational program.

Good and pertinent suggestions are being made. But in some cases the ideas propounded strike at the foundations of our American school system which has been dedicated to giving *every* boy and girl the opportunity to climb as far up the educational ladder as his ability and ambition will take him.

The high schools are absorbing sharp thrusts, some merited, others unjustified. Attacks are being made on requirements that a person know not only *what* to teach, but *how* to teach. Foundation money is backing some self-styled friends of education who for years have been carping and criticizing. Double-talk is frequent—pious platitudes praising education as the basis of democracy, correlated with efforts to block effective financial support for the schools.

Where do we fit in? Right in the middle!

As teachers and administrators, we know the strengths and weaknesses of our own school systems. We have the obligation to strengthen any deficiencies which exist. If stronger courses are needed, we can provide them. If the gifted are neglected, we can discover and challenge them. If more finance is essential to provide the improved programs demanded, we can work to obtain it. If some school reorganization must come, we can help bring it about. If better prepared teachers are needed, we can start with being better ourselves. If the public has not been told of the real achievements of our schools and youth, we can tell them.

The people are interested in their schools. Otherwise the "great debate" would fade from inattention. Let us make sure that when the tumult and shouting have died our public schools will not have been damaged, but will be doing an even more effective job of preparing youth to live in our society where the individual is respected and important. We have a task ahead.—*Kansas Teacher*.

# Do We Need a "National Curriculum"?

## A Conference Report

By RALPH W. TYLER

### EDITOR'S NOTE

*The Conference on Policies and Strategy for Strengthening the Curriculum of the American Public Schools was convened at Stanford, California, January 24-27, 1959, by Paul R. Hanna of Stanford University and Ralph W. Tyler of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. The conference was supported by a grant from the Fund for the Advancement of Education. The fifteen invited participants included outstanding laymen, well-known scholars and scientists, and educational leaders in public school work.*

*The members of the conference were:*

### PARTICIPANTS

Mary Bingham, *Vice-president, Louisville Courier-Journal and Times*  
Paul H. Buck, *Pforzheimer University Professor and Director of Libraries, Harvard University*  
William G. Carr, *Executive Secretary, National Education Association*  
Francis S. Chase, *Professor and Chairman, Department of Education; Dean, Graduate School of Education, University of Chicago*  
James B. Conant, *President Emeritus, Harvard University*  
John W. Dodds, *Professor of English, Stanford University*  
Graham DuShane, *Editor, Science*  
John H. Fischer, *Superintendent of Public Instruction, Baltimore Public Schools*  
Will French, *Professor Emeritus, Teachers College, Columbia University*  
Leland Hazard, *Director, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company*  
A. John Holden, Jr., *State Commissioner of Education, Vermont*  
Ora H. Roberts, Jr., *Prosecuting Attorney, Vanderburgh County, Indiana*  
Theodore W. Schultz, *Chairman, Department of Economics, University of Chicago*  
Robert Lewis Shayon, *Contributor to TV, Radio, Saturday Review*  
Henry Toy, Jr., *President, National Citizens Council for Better Schools*

### CONVENERS AND OBSERVERS

Clarence Henry Faust, *Vice-president, Ford Foundation*  
Paul R. Hanna, *Lee I. Jacks Professor of Child Education, Stanford University*  
I. James Quillen, *Dean, School of Education, Stanford University*  
Ralph W. Tyler, *Director, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences*

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

THE CURRENT NATIONAL CONCERN with excellence in American education brings clearly to attention the importance of developing the best possible curriculum in American public schools. Many individuals, groups, and organizations are ready

to work on the problem. However, it is becoming apparent that a sound, concerted effort to improve the school curriculum cannot be undertaken until several critical issues are resolved, namely:

1. How can the public school curriculum adequately represent the national interest



in the objectives, the content, and the character of education, and at the same time reflect the special needs and interests of the state and of the local community? Can a proper division of activities, of responsibility, and of authority be outlined to serve as a basis for efforts at improvement?

2. There are many groups now seeking to rebuild the public school curriculum. Which ones should be encouraged, and what is the proper division of labor among them? This involves such questions as: To what extent should the curriculum be shaped by the aspirations and desires of the general public, on the one hand, and by the best thought of contemporary scholars and scientists, on the other? What are the roles of the teacher, the parent, the school supervisor, the professor of education, the psychologist, the sociologist, and the philosopher in the development of the curriculum?

3. What is an effective strategy for moving ahead on the task of curriculum improvement? What steps can be taken and what procedures can be followed that are likely to develop a more nearly adequate public school curriculum?

#### THE DISCUSSION

These questions served as the initial stimuli for spirited discussion which continued through six sessions. The first phase served as an orientation, clarifying the particular interests and concerns of the conferees. They recognized that teaching and learning in the American public schools are influenced by several important factors, such as the quality of the teachers and the size and wealth of the community. However, it was felt that this conference could not deal with all factors but was primarily concerned with what is taught and how it is organized and developed. It was also pointed out that the curriculum is established, maintained, and changed through a complex process involving both laymen

and educational groups. At its best, this process is one in which the legally constituted boards of education depend for guidance on those who have some special and expert knowledge. At its worst, when pressure groups influence curriculum decisions without careful examination of the total responsibility of the school, or when steps are taken or not taken on the basis of the limited outlook of individual school board members, the curriculum is likely to fall far short of the best aims and content for the schools.

In the early discussion, the term "national curriculum" was sometimes used in contrast to a curriculum concerned only with the interests of the state or community. The conferees found this term ambiguous and confusing and decided not to use it. They all agreed that the right of an individual child to learn is universal and should not be limited by the accident of birth or residence, but the conference did not recommend any fundamental change in the locus of responsibility for control of the curriculum or in the way in which the decision-making process operates. The conferees believed that the development of a more nearly universal outlook in curriculum content in contrast to a parochial view could be better brought about through greater public understanding and persuasion rather than by changes in the locus and methods of control.

The conference agreed that the American public school curriculum needs strengthening. As Mr. Schultz put it, "Since Sputnik, the spotlight has been focused on education and we have become more conscious of the great importance of the schools in achieving our national as well as our personal objectives. No matter how effective our present educational program is, we are needing and demanding still greater achievements. So much is expected of the schools that the curriculum has been very widely extended." The conference agreed that the schools could not undertake every educa-



tional job that some person or group recommends. One of the ways to strengthen the curriculum is to select the most important educational tasks which the school is best able to achieve and to focus the curriculum on these tasks. In this connection, Commissioner Holden commented:

"The school curriculum today is being shaped partly by the efforts of well-intentioned groups with axes to grind, promoting such tasks for the school as conservation education, driver education, and the like. Recent events have stepped up these pressures. It seems likely that these pressures will not result in sound improvements in the curriculum but rather in demoralization of the process of careful study and planning of the curriculum."

Mr. Toy said: "Improvement of the curriculum will take place only when laymen take more interest in their schools and have better knowledge of them. The National Citizens Council has found that study groups in which citizens participate can raise the level of public understanding of the schools and can stimulate action for improvement."

Another weakness the conference noted in the present situation is the delegation of much of curriculum planning to committees of teachers who do not have access to the scholars and scientists who can bring important areas of expert knowledge to bear on the development of courses and programs. Mr. Quillen recalled the influence of the Committee of Ten at the turn of the century, when college and university professors worked with high-school teachers and principals to outline the high-school curriculum of that day. Following the agreements on outlines, professors and teachers together prepared textbooks and other instructional materials to be used in the curriculum. Unfortunately, between 1910 and 1920, scholars and scientists in the universities became engrossed in other problems and few have since worked with school faculties on curriculum problems. Mr.

Dodds pointed out that curriculum planning and the development of instructional materials require the special knowledge of scholars and scientists as well as the experience and understanding of school faculties. The college and university people need to be brought back into joint efforts with school personnel in planning and developing the curriculum.

In this connection Mr. Hanna referred to his article in the *Nation's Schools* for September, 1958, entitled "Design for a National Curriculum." He said that we need to agree on a curriculum design that will at least expose all children to a common set of values and a common fund of knowledge. Our education should prepare us to hold in common a belief in democratic ideals. Our survival as a free people requires our understanding of the most significant generalizations from the frontiers of knowledge. A curriculum locally conceived and developed by the individual teacher cannot adequately meet national needs. Hence, he proposed a voluntary, nongovernmental attack on the development of a curriculum and materials that could be of use to all schools. The plan initially involves establishing a temporary curriculum center, on the staff of which would be ten curriculum fellows, five laymen and fifteen scholars and scientists. This center would develop in its first year a series of papers to serve as a basis for wide discussion by educators and laymen. In the second year a revised and more comprehensive set of proposals would be prepared and discussed widely. Then consideration could be given to the establishment of a permanent center, or several such centers, for the study, identification, and experiment with the generalizations needed by all children and youth. Out of such continuing effort might come proposals and curriculum models for the consideration of the local school authorities. He argued that such a co-operative attack would be far more adequate than the work of an individual or

several individuals working in isolation from each other.

Mr. Hanna's proposal provoked extensive discussion. The conferees strongly favored joint efforts by school and college groups to rebuild the curriculum. Some thought the establishment of a number of such groups would be better than a single permanent center. This would provide opportunity for a variety of ideas to be tried out and would also permit such groups and centers to influence the education of teachers so that they would be better prepared to work with new curriculum designs, content, and materials.

This discussion was summarized by Mr. Chase, who said: "We have identified both the common agreements and the issues which divide us. There is agreement on the need to speed up the quality of American education, on the need for continuing study of content and organization, on the need for more rigorous selection of content and the need for some guidance available to the people who make decisions community by community.

"We disagree on how to provide the guidance. Some seem to prefer a single national design for the curriculum, while others prefer to seek a variety of imaginative solutions tested out through research. Some would prefer a single center where all these curriculum tasks would be undertaken, while others would like to see the decentralization with various tasks undertaken by various groups. Some would prefer a joint effort of schools, organizations, universities, and other bodies, while others believe that each institution has certain functions which it can do best. I believe, for example, that universities have a unique function of obtaining and organizing knowledge. This they can do better than other institutions, but they perform badly as enunciators of policy which lay citizens are better able to do."

Mr. DuShane suggested that a pilot effort was already under way which was achieving

excellent results. "This is the Physical Science Study Group centered at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and supported by the National Science Foundation. This study group includes eminent physicists, distinguished high-school teachers, and others who know a good deal about teaching and learning. They are completely rebuilding the high school physics curriculum. A second study group for the mathematics curriculum has been established at Yale. These projects indicate that great values can come from study groups of this sort."

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

This discussion led to the first recommendation of the conference, a recommendation which was unanimously adopted.

1. There should be established immediately study groups for the redefinition of objectives, content, and organization of the public school curriculum and for the development of and experimentation with instructional materials for the courses thus designed. There should be at least two study groups in each subject so as to encourage original thinking and efforts rather than to restrict exploration and experimentation to a single plan.

Each study group should be composed of school teachers and college or university professors. The study groups might also include supervisors, administrators, and persons from schools of education who could bring particular kinds of competence, experience, or ideas helpful to the study undertaken. The probable priority in the establishment of study groups is: (a) social studies, (b) English, (c) biology, (d) others. The Physical Science Study Group centered at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Mathematics Study Group centered at Yale are already under way with support from the National Science Foundation. The mathematics group is concerned with the subject both in elementary school and in high school. Where possible, each

study group should work on the curriculum from the earliest introduction of the subject on through high school.

A second unanimous recommendation of the conference was closely related to the first.

2. There should be established one or more study groups on problems of organization of the curriculum as a whole, its sequence and grade placement, the relations among the several subjects, and the conditions required for stimulating and guiding effective learning. Whereas the primary concerns of study groups recommended in No. 1 are the development of course objectives, outlines of content, and instructional materials for a separate strand of the school curriculum, the primary tasks of the study groups recommended in No. 2 are to work on ways of relating effectively the several subjects and ways of achieving a truly sequential organization. Since these questions would involve both subject experts and psychologists, it seemed appropriate also to ask these groups to investigate conditions for effective learning of curriculum tasks.

The purposes of these two recommendations are (a) to bring together again scholars and scientists and school people to make use of their special knowledge and experience in curriculum planning, (b) to establish a means for investigation, experimentation, and evaluation of curriculum ideas, materials, and practices so that they can be tried out in schools and revised and improved on the basis of the results from trials, (c) to establish multiple centers so as to prevent any monopoly of curriculum thinking and to encourage several independent lines of thought and effort whose relative values can be discovered by experimentation and appraisal.

The third recommendation of the conference was not unanimously adopted. Mr. Conant opposed it and Mr. Toy was not present when the vote was taken. This recommendation was directed toward the

difficulties encountered by lay boards of education and citizens generally in getting wise guidance on current educational issues where so many special interest groups are involved.

Several of the lay members of the conference said that they were keenly aware that today most of the articulate groups seeking to give leadership to education were groups with only a partial or limited view of the total situation. The conferees who are directly involved in the administration of public schools also spoke in support of the establishment of a commission of respected, public-spirited citizens who would study the current educational situation and make recommendations regarding policies and actions for boards of education which would be recognized as a more objective and impartial view than any currently available.

Mr. Buck expressed the majority view when he said: "We greatly need at this time a commission which would study the American public school curriculum and would report to the public on (1) how the present curriculum came to be; (2) its scope—that is, what the schools can and should do and what they should not attempt; (3) what the basic aims of the public school should be, in an exposition which would clarify the conflicting alternative aims; (4) what the functions of the major school subjects are—for example, what is history as a subject of study in the school; (5) methods of instruction, including the role of textbooks and other instructional materials."

Mr. Buck's suggestion led to a lengthy discussion and to considerable debate. Most of the conferees said that a careful study and report by a curriculum commission which would stand or fall on its own merits would have important values at this time. Particularly is there need for strong statements on the real priorities in education which schools must recognize. In response to the discussion Mr. Hazard introduced the following resolution:

"We recommend an advisory committee of persons, nonrepresentative of any organization and chosen by the donor of the required funds, to study the history and status of curriculum in the public school systems of the United States and to report and publish its conclusions as to the curriculum, priorities, and means most effective to implement such curriculum and priorities in the public schools, to the end that the common knowledge and the common values conducive to individual freedom, competence, and development may be disclosed for selection by individual public school communities. The tenure of the committee should be two years of full-time work unless the committee should find that its report can be released within a shorter period of time."

#### REMARKS OF MEMBERS

In the discussion of this resolution several strongly worded points of view were expressed. Mr. Carr stated: "There is a crying need for national leadership in education, for a more vigorous approach to a national program of American education. We need a commission to study and recommend priorities in education. The crux of the issue is to find some means for selecting members of the commission. They should be good people, competent people, public-spirited, respected, and people who would not stir up hostilities which would defeat the purpose."

Mr. Shayon strongly endorsed a national commission which would work full time in continuing contact with the study groups previously recommended. The commission should be imaginative and bold in its recommendations so as to attract adequate public attention. He thought the commission should be a permanent one with a changing membership.

Mr. Chase did not think full-time membership on the commission was necessary. The commission should have a full-time technical staff but he would not like to see

the commission members themselves involved in details of the curriculum. Furthermore, though he supported the recommendation, he did not give the commission as much emphasis as some of the others. Mr. Chase said that there was already public pressure from lay groups, and the schools were responding without adequate guidance from those with professional competence. Hence, he believed that the study groups recommended were more urgently needed than the commission.

Mr. French presented an itemized list of his reasons for supporting the creation of a commission. He said:

"I came to this meeting believing:

"1. That the statements of objectives and purposes for American education which have been developed over the last fifty years are consistent with each other, sound, and generally accepted by lay leaders and schools.

"2. That the existing curriculum, particularly in the high school, is not an effective instrument for achieving them.

"3. That the least effective part of this program is that required of all students in the high school which must be what we are depending upon if these purposes and objectives are to be achieved with *all* youth.

"4. That this required element of the curriculum is 'the soft underbelly' of the existing program and needs most to be improved in both content and method.

"5. That many school communities' staffs and laymen are not so competent as they should be—and can become—to do this reconstruction nor do they fully sense the urgency.

"6. That the American public at large, however, recognizes the need to raise up a generation better able to work together effectively toward the solution of world and national problems than they will be unless they possess in common broad understandings, attitudes, and competencies which can be strengthened through a better planned program of required education.



"7. That the need is urgent and immediate and a 'clear and present danger' exists.

"So I hope that this group could agree to suggest the launching of an organized nationwide effort designed to help local school communities work more diligently and effectively on this curricular problem because through such a movement:

"(1) The importance of such local efforts to realize more completely the generally accepted objectives and purposes of American education can be forcefully and repeatedly brought to the attention of the local schools' lay and professional leaders.

"(2) They will come to see more clearly that the school staff and lay leaders must come to accept common purposes if agreement on curricular changes is to be achieved.

"(3) They will become better acquainted with the processes by which these agreements can best be built.

"(4) They will learn about ways of evaluating the existing programs in the light of their accepted purposes.

"(5) The schools' staffs will develop a feeling of confidence that the local community wants them to take the lead in developing a better curriculum.

"(6) They will become better acquainted with ideas and plans which have been proposed and/or used elsewhere so they can make more intelligent choices of what is to be proposed for use in each local community.

"(7) The improvement of the local schools' curriculum will thus be stepped up to the optimum rate.

"At the conclusion of this meeting I am encouraged by such measure of agreement as has been evident in our discussions to hope that the Fund for the Advancement of Education or some other nationally organized educational group with or without further sanction from this or any other group, will launch without delay such a movement and thus stimulate, guide, and accelerate the process of curriculum im-

provement now sporadically and haltingly limping along at too slow a rate."

Mrs. Bingham said that she recognized the need for strengthening the curriculum and for bringing the university scholars back into the work of curriculum development. She was not sure, however, how far down in the grades the examination should go. The primary grades are a special problem and she was not clear what help the scholar could give at that level. She strongly endorsed the proposal for a national commission which would study and report on the history of our present curriculum (how it came to be) and which would recommend priorities (what the schools should do and what they should not attempt), and would explain and clarify the basic aims of public education. However, she was doubtful about the commission's dealing with curriculum content or method. This should be left to the study groups, although the commission should seek to assess the scholars' recommendations. She also said that the commission would have to be part time to get the kind of people needed to serve on it.

Mr. Roberts felt very strongly the need for a commission, for he finds great confusion over education as a matter of national concern. Lay boards feel inadequate in their knowledge and judgment and would welcome the recommendations of a good commission.

Mr. Fischer analyzed the situation thus: "There is growing awareness of the need to improve American education, particularly the common core of the curriculum. Three alternatives have been proposed. The first is a federal educational system, which is wholly unacceptable. The second is to get along with the present structure and procedures, and this, too, is inadequate to meet the needs. The third is to maintain the present educational structure but to get national leadership for guidance in making wise decisions. This leadership would include the study groups giving help

on the design and content of the curriculum and on instructional materials and procedures, and the commission to deal with priorities and overriding needs. This third course of action seems most likely to succeed."

Mr. Holden said that of the several proposals we have made, the one most urgently needed and least likely to come about without strong and concerted effort is the commission to deal with priorities and other overriding matters. The legally constituted bodies at local and state community levels which are responsible for decisions do not have the people and the resources to make adequate studies to provide a basis for wise decisions. To serve this purpose a commission would be very helpful.

Mr. Buck, Mr. Dodds, Mr. DuShane, and Mr. Schultz endorsed the commission proposal and saw it as a way of helping local school boards to gain perspective and understanding to guide their decisions.

Mr. Conant, however, opposed the recommendation of a national commission. He said: "I don't think there is any clear and present danger which requires any single body to issue pronouncements. The competition among study groups would provide more than one point of view for school boards to consider. The layman needs education on diversity because there is so much in the air today about a national curriculum which might lead to a single pattern of education rather than the many diverse patterns which we now have. I strongly dissent from the idea of any national commission. In place of a single body looking at the school curriculum, we should have a number of universities looking at it independently."

Mr. Hazard said that Mr. Conant had pointed out the possible dangers of a commission but he felt the need was so great that the idea was worth a try. The majority of the conferees agreed with Mr. Hazard.



## The Internship

It seems to me that intern teaching would accomplish many worth-while objectives. At the present time many young people who were born and have spent their entire lives in large cities are finding their way as beginning teachers into small community school systems, and, conversely, many youngsters with rural or small-town backgrounds are beginning their teaching experience in large city systems. A lack of community background makes the already difficult adjustment of a beginner even more difficult. An intern assignment into the kind of community where the new teacher will begin her experience would prove a great help in getting the new teacher started effectively. Her four or five months as an intern in this type of community would make it possible for her to begin this adjustment at a time when she is being more closely supervised than is the usual lot of a new

teacher beginning her first assignment. During the intern period the student teacher should be assigned only to the best and most successful teachers in the system. This will enable her to get not only very practical and close supervision, but also to be able to apply the theory of techniques and methods in a practical classroom situation under competent and careful guidance. Upon returning to the campus following an intern assignment the student teacher will then be ready for remedial training in greater depth based upon the appraisal of the supervising teacher and the administrators with whom she has served.

The practical experience she has received should also be quite helpful in assisting her to better orient herself in the entire program of her teacher training.—W. D. MERRIFIELD in the *North Central Association Quarterly*.



# THE SCHOOL CRISIS

## *Chevlin Heights Meets the Challenge*

By JOHN F. OHLES

*Most significant event in back-to-school days this past fall was the highly publicized opening of Chevlin Heights High School inaugurating the Essentialist era in public education and sealing the doom of the namby-pamby, progressive domination of the schools. The following account of these first two months of a return to fundamental education has been provided through the assistance of Dr. Arlington Smith, Chevlin Heights superintendent of schools.*

Only through prompt action of the Chevlin Heights board of education was this suburban community able to effect those changes in public education authorized by the state legislature in the special August session. Under the provisions of this legislation, schooling at public expense above the age of fourteen need be provided "only for those of appropriate native ability,

demonstrated achievement, and satisfactory deportment." Under the terms of this mandate, school enrollment was immediately reduced by one-third. Further elimination was to be expected among those unable or unwilling to meet the stiffened academic standards.

Of immediate import at the start of the school year was the revision of the curriculum, with all students required to carry an academic load of English, social studies, mathematics, science, and a foreign language. Added requirements have been made through the week in physical education, vocal music, and art. All superfluous equipment (industrial arts supplies, sewing machines, kitchen appliances, typewriters, and so on) were disposed of at public auction. For the time being it was decided to maintain the athletic and instrumental music activities, although in nonschool hours.

Due to the limited time to put the new program into operation and to the shortage of trained teaching personnel, no new teachers were hired; changes were made in the assignment of faculty members whose classes were discontinued. The home economics and industrial arts teachers have been assigned science and mathematics classes, the driver-training instructor is teaching Spanish (in place of Russian originally planned), and the commercial teacher is teaching German. At some future time qualified teachers of Russian and French will compose the modern language department.

The school administration frankly admits that student reaction has been mixed. Only four students have voluntarily dropped from the program, but a goodly

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

*Suppose we take the advice of some of the critics of public education and attempt to put into effect their suggestions. Would school programs be improved and would youth be better served? This is the question asked in this article. The author writes in an accompanying letter, "I have attempted to anticipate some of the new problems likely in the transition of 'Chevlin Heights' high school to a selective educational institution. It seems to me that attempting to solve old problems sometimes results in the creation of new and more difficult problems." He is assistant professor, State Teachers College, Fredonia, New York.*

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number have found it difficult to maintain the level of achievement originally prescribed. This problem has been met by temporary relaxation of the requirements with plans to return to the original goals by next fall. The eventual school population is expected to be half of the previous enrollment.

First serious protest against the plan originated from parents of pupils excluded from the school roster. Most vociferous complaints came from several professional and business families. A dentist has since moved from the community and a few former pupils have been enrolled in private schools. Three actions of importance have originated from this group of parents: (1) institution of legal action against the school board and the enabling legislation, (2) organization of a political movement to elect sympathetic board members next spring, and (3) plans to organize a private school. Among former pupils now attending private schools is the daughter of a member of the school board. Realizing the impossibility of relaxing admission in the least, the board voted unanimously to maintain the entrance requirements without exception.

To date unexpected problems have been encountered in the extracurricular program. The expensive new football stadium, so proudly dedicated just last year, stood empty in its second season, as it was impossible to field a team to defend the conference championship. While it is true that eliminating the less apt pupils cut deeper into the number of boys than girls, the major obstacle to recruiting football players was tightened academic standards and the resultant fear by many boys that participation in athletics might result in scholastic problems leading to expulsion. Realistically, this is a valid fear and it is doubtful that Chevelin Heights will be able to engage in any interscholastic athletic competitions. Instead, an active and popular intramural program has been organized.

While parental reaction to selective admission was substantial, criticism from service clubs, civic groups, and fraternal organizations resulting from cancellation of athletics was astounding. The local newspaper, only shortly before applauding the new system, became a leading voice in opposition. The immediate result was a flood of criticism of the school by many influential individuals and groups; collective action on their part has not yet materialized.

The music instructor has tossed in the sponge with reference to the colorful and well-drilled marching band. Not only did he find the entire percussion and half the brass sections no longer in school, but many former players refused to practice in out-of-school time. The band now numbers eighteen pieces and is inclined more toward classical than martial music. The school was subjected to minor criticism when, for the first time in twenty years, the school band did not participate in the annual harvest festival.

While the school does not feel a responsibility to pupils excluded from classes beyond that previously held toward those expelled or voluntarily dropped from school, the faculty has expended considerable effort to help find jobs for these young people. There has, unfortunately, been little success. Although state laws have been passed lowering the legal working age, union regulations and employer requirements make it exceedingly difficult to place young job applicants. Most of those dropped from school are, as yet, unemployed. Some law enforcement officers and sociologists have predicted serious behavior problems from these youngsters out of school, although such difficulties have not yet developed. Local churches and the chamber of commerce have provided recreational facilities but the police chief has expressed concern that trouble may be ahead when the novelty wears thin.

Several plans to provide instruction for unemployed youth in trade schools have

been submitted to the school board. While no decisions have been made as yet, the problems of financing a local trade school or of using school funds to send youngsters away to schools providing vocational training are serious, indeed. A philosophical debate concerning the responsibility of public schools for training youngsters unfit for academic schooling quickly reverted to the proposition that whatever responsibility society feels will sooner or later fall on the school as the most logical agency to deal with the problem.

Additional pressures for a local trade school are likely to arise from employers who have previously recruited semitrained stenographic, clerical, mechanical, or apprentice applicants from the local high school. These businessmen point out the probability that youngsters trained away from the community will not return for work opportunities.

In appraising the new program after these few weeks, Superintendent Smith pointed out certain patterns. On the credit side, predictions for improved classwork and deportment have been generally confirmed. Most pupils demonstrate a more serious attitude toward their classes and appear to be fighting to stay in school. As previously noted, however, the first effort to enforce higher standards proved to be too selective and expectations have been lowered, at least temporarily. Disciplinary problems are easily handled when the students involved are warned of their possible expulsion. The school atmosphere has definitely changed.

On the debit side are the legal and political threats posed by parents of children excluded from school. Some individuals, formerly enthusiastic for selective education, have become vigorous opponents when children of friends or relatives have been involved.

Unexpected opposition has developed among the general public, partly because of concern for unemployed youth, partly because of civic identification with athletic and musical programs. The school board is developing plans for sponsorship of a community recreation program open to youth both in and out of school and is looking into the need for trade school facilities. Among the most serious problems are the difficulties in scheduling athletic contests with other communities.

One last problem is not local but revolves about the difficulty of recruiting well-trained teachers to staff the program. If, as seems likely, the new curriculum becomes generally accepted throughout the state, it will be years before enough qualified science, mathematics, and foreign language teachers will be available.

While it would be premature to label the new education a success or failure, the school administrators feel that their experiences should prove helpful to other schools planning similar programs. Undoubtedly, a word of caution that school board members might feel, even if unable to express it, would be to point out something that politicians have learned long since: the unpredictable fickleness of the voting and tax-paying public.

### ◆ “Myths” that Cripple Our Schools

1. The myth that local control of education, with perhaps a few concessions made to state control, is one of the important safeguards of educational freedom and of our free society.
2. The myth that public education was not made a federal responsibility in the Constitution because the founding fathers feared the potentialities for dictatorship in a federal school system.
3. The myth that local control of education is a boon to educational research and experimentation.
4. The myth that state governments and local school districts have the financial resources to support an adequate educational system.—MYRON LIEBERMAN in *Phi Delta Kappan*.



## Findings



**JUNIOR-HIGH-SCHOOL CERTIFICATION:** Early in the year the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* reported that in Wisconsin the training for teachers at the junior-high-school level is nonexistent. The timeliness of this subject is not limited to any specific season of the year. There may be other states which do not make special provision for certification of teachers at this level which would be interested in the substance of this article.

Because of the unique nature of the junior high school, with the function of bridging the gap between elementary and secondary school, the authors feel that a particular type of training is in order. Their recommendations, drawn from a survey taken by the Committee on Junior High School Teacher Training (under the Wisconsin Commission on TEPS), include five points:

- (1) Building of courses of study geared to the junior-high-school level, with aids for the teachers to help them understand the problems of this age group.
- (2) Teaching of courses designed to build broad background in the major areas, to improve teacher competence.
- (3) Offering of courses for future teachers to provide methodology appropriate to the junior-high-school materials.
- (4) Teaching of basic principles of reading improvement and methods of dealing with same.
- (5) Offering of courses in preadolescent and adolescent psychology in order to bring to the prospective teacher an understand-

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Good, bad, indifferent, or important, there is a great amount of counting studies and other research going on in the field of education. We think readers will be interested in brief, unqualified summaries of some main points in some of the findings. Lack of space prohibits much explanation of the methods used, the degree of accuracy or conclusiveness, and sometimes even the scope of the study.

ing of physical, social, emotional, and environmental factors which pertain to the age group at the junior-high level.

Along with the foregoing recommendations, there were eight others which related to the implementation of such a program leading to certification.

**REVAMPING THE SCIENCE CURRICULUM:** The *Educational Forum*, publication of Kappa Delta Pi, carried an article concerning the field of science at the high-school level and the teaching thereof. The author discussed the dilemma which has confronted science teachers at the secondary level until recently when the impact of the space age hit this field and showed up the crying need for reappraisal and revamping of an outmoded curriculum. It appears that the teachers had the frustrating job of trying to tailor the subject matter of our science subjects—geared for the training of specialists—to fit the classroom teaching situation of heterogeneous groups of young people of varying intellectual capacities. However, the science fields will come into their own with the new emphasis in this area. Specifically, an experimental course in physics has been tried in eight selected high schools. It is based on a brand new syllabus drawn up by a committee called the Physical Science Study Committee. The members of this august group have written a textbook, set up visual aids, and in general revised the old physics curriculum to fit the atomic age physics of today. So far, the experiment seems to be working satisfactorily. The dilemma of providing the proper subject matter and at the same time considering individual differences so that the two factors are equalized has not been resolved completely.

JANE E. CORNISH

# Curriculum Improvement, Ltd.

By DEGROFF PLATTE AND EDWENA MOORE

REPORTS WE READ tell of curriculum improvement projects that seem almost too neat, too well put together, too co-operative to be true. Even as we doubt, we wonder uneasily why we ourselves cannot work so smoothly. These projects may begin with a joint recognition of a problem, move through a period of highly productive effort, and progress rapidly to a satisfactory solution. This makes us restless; we think, "Yes, but in *my* school . . ." or "Didn't they have *any* trouble?" The present report tells of a curriculum improvement project which did have troubles; the troubles are included in the account.

The project was carried on in a junior high school in a large union high-school district. Those who were involved included a principal harassed by the problems of

fitting too many pupils into a too small building; seventh- and eighth-grade arithmetic teachers suffering from large classes and difficult classroom facilities; a curriculum co-ordinator from the county schools office trying to find an "in"; and two arithmetic experts. The atmosphere of the school was brisk and reactions to an ill-considered proposal could be chilly. The principal and teachers were ready to reject any suggestions of meaningless activity or of unproductive meetings.

The project was given its start when the principal remarked to the curriculum co-ordinator that his teachers had developed a good arithmetic program and were interested in any further improvements they could make. Justification for a meeting was provided by the new county course of study in arithmetic, to which the teachers had not been introduced. A second county co-ordinator, who had served as chairman and chief resource person for the committee which had prepared the course of study, was asked to introduce the material to the teachers. In planning for the meeting the principal and the co-ordinators agreed that unless the discussion brought out problems for future consideration, the group would be asked to meet only the one time.

The teachers came to the first meeting not too interested in a course of study, and the curriculum co-ordinators came with full realization of teacher attitudes. The discussion leader made a significant contribution by something she did *not* do—she was not at all defensive about her work, nor was she concerned with pushing the group to reach common agreements. Questions, criticisms, suggestions—all were accepted as contributions. Discussion gradually became freer and wide ranging and before the end of the meeting it became clear

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The security that teachers may find in traditional concepts and procedures is often a barrier to any proposed changes in curriculum. Few teachers in their right senses will willingly exchange a secure feeling for an insecure one unless they themselves think up the ideas for change. The problem of curriculum improvement is not so much what changes are needed as it is who determines the kind and rate of change. Inherent in an understanding of this problem is what David Riesman has called "the failure to see in what ways an institution has to change in order to remain the same."*

*The authors are curriculum co-ordinators in the San Diego (California) County school system. They make the point that successful curriculum projects are seldom a logical, pat development. The true course of curriculum improvement programs, like love, does not always run smoothly.*

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that all the teachers were sharing a common concern: they were beginning each year's work with assumptions rather than with knowledge of what their pupils really had achieved.

At this point the meeting could have gone on only to end with the all-too-familiar listing of unsolved problems; the principal, however, in the role expected of him, made the definite suggestion that a second meeting be held to give the teachers the chance to explore this new concern which had been identified; the teachers agreed that a second meeting would be worth while. It was with this action that the teachers, principal, and co-ordinators began moving together, a movement which resulted in the formation of a working group.\* As it turned out, the course of study served to focus attention and to open discussion, but in subsequent meetings it no longer was the center of attention.

The second meeting began with an eagerness to get to work on the problem which was commonly understood to be, "How can we find out more about the arithmetic our pupils really know when they come to us? Are we satisfied that the standardized test we give furnishes the information we need?" From this point on, the emphasis was kept on the "practical," away from the "theoretical," and on the expressed concerns of the teachers. The first task was to search for a good standardized test which would diagnose individual arithmetic achievement. Members of the group quickly investigated all available sources of information, but without success. One by one, group members became discouraged, and finally they all felt no standardized test would give them the information they wanted. But the problem had been raised, and it remained to haunt the group.

\* Members of the working committee were on the faculty of the Chula Vista Junior High School, Sweetwater Union High School District, California: Harry Wootters, Chairman; Clarence Cate, John D. Clark, Marvin R. Matthews, Mrs. Nell Steiner, Anso Stokes, and Mrs. Lucy Ward.

Eventually someone put the obvious question into words, "Can we build our own diagnostic tests?"

Again the group had reached a point at which the whole project could have broken down. There was common agreement that diagnostic tests were needed, but the task seemed too great. Everyone realized that a great deal of hard work would have to be done, and everyone's work schedule already was heavily loaded. There was also difficulty in arranging satisfactory time for meetings. "Emergencies" kept cropping up. The procedures for developing diagnostic tests were new to the group, and members hesitated to begin work on a project in which they felt they needed help. One group member, recognizing the feeling of frustration which all members felt, came up with the saving idea: "Perhaps we need someone outside our group to help us out of our impasse." Fortunately, such a consultant was available, and in one meeting the group was helped to move forward by constructing a list of possible tests which could be developed. With this tangible progress, interest picked up again.

Not everyone, of course, can be lucky enough to have available a consultant such as the one this group used. However, although she was an authority in the field of arithmetic, the consultant made the greatest contributions in the areas of working relations and processes. She was impartial, she had no ax to grind, she understood the problems facing the group, and she wanted the group to work through its own problems. It was because of these qualities that she was able to get the group to moving ahead, although the ostensible reason for asking for her help was that she was an authority in arithmetic.

The group struggled through the usual problems in developing diagnostic tests, and it was here that the true caliber of the teachers began to show. Now that they were sure they were working on a practical problem of real concern to them, they be-



gan to spend long hours on the project. Everything available on diagnostic testing was read by one or more of the group; sub-areas for the first test were defined; sample test items were developed, brought to the group, discussed, torn apart, and reassembled. This was slow work, and as the school year progressed, other responsibilities became heavier. By the time purposes were agreed upon, ways of working were clarified, and the first test was completed and given, the end of the school year forced the temporary suspension of the curriculum improvement project.

It frequently is difficult to begin again on work which has been put aside for the summer, but with the second year these teachers wasted no time in getting back to work, and during the year they completed a series of tests on understanding numbers and the number system. The procedure included giving each test on a trial basis to more than eight hundred pupils in the seventh and eighth grades, scoring the tests, analyzing the answers to individual items, comparing answers to items measuring the same understanding, and comparing scores for seventh and eighth grades. Almost without discussion, and with common agreement, the teachers set the stage for each test and, after giving it, discussed it with their pupils. Subsequent meetings made good use of teacher judgments and pupil comments, which were very helpful in refining test content. The project has continued into the third year, with work being

done on tests of computation, which will complete the series.

The outcomes of the project seem obvious to the participants. They make no claims that the tests are the best that might be devised; in fact, in the light of their new insights, they know that they themselves now could do better. But the teachers do feel that they are getting more and valuable information about *their* pupils, in *their* classes, in *their* district. In the process of working together, group members have reached the stage of being able to sit down together and talk as only friends can dare to talk with one another—freely, openly, and without fear. It was possible for one teacher to come to a meeting, drop the scored tests on the desk, and announce, "No wonder my kids have been having trouble. I've been teaching way over their heads." The curriculum co-ordinators have had a warm and satisfying experience. They will not forget that a start was possible only after the teachers were willing to bring out into the open their own real concerns; that the principal was the one person without whom the project could not have been started or, once started, continued; that work really began after a feeling of mutual confidence had been established. The major lesson may well be that curriculum improvement takes time and persistence, that it means working with people rather than getting people to work, and that it often is not so easy as it may sound.

## The Need for Nonconformity

Indeed insofar as schools are agents of social development as well as instruments of society, they have a duty to resist, rather than to yield to, community pressures. Because schools are a function of society, a great many educators think it the primary duty of the schools—and especially the high school, which here occupies a crucial position—to "adapt" the young to the society in which they are to live. Needless to say, if each generation of young is merely fitted to the existing order of things, we shall end up with a Byzantine, not a Western, civilization. A dynamic society cannot stay dynamic if the existing order fixes the standards to which all must conform and into which all must be fitted.—HENRY STEELE COMMAGER in the *School Review*.

# Three Questions Asked by EARLY ADOLESCENTS

By  
GEORGE M. KRALL

THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE REACHED the middle and later decades of life have in the course of time forgotten the tense emotional conflicts which marked the passing of their early teens. Most older people have lost sympathetic understanding of and contact with this group of young people. The language used in reference to them indicates the degree of revulsion the long since mature individual has for the early teenager. They are described as "silly," "wild," "lacking in morals," "without shame," or "rotten." Frequently, too, the virtuous-feeling adults are impelled to look down their noses at the victims of their comments, hoping that the full effect of their words and manner will be duly registered.

If any adult makes the effort to cultivate the confidence of individuals in this age range and proves himself a sympathetic listener he will find much innate goodness

underneath the raw exterior. They are idealistic, condemning in no uncertain terms any adult who violates the accepted codes of social behavior. Their goals are wholesome, but often they are vague as to when and how their goals should be reached. They may pursue their goals in a manner which relies more on energy than on direction.

During their calmer moments, they concern themselves with problems that may be grouped under the following three questions: (1) What am I going to believe? (2) What am I going to do? (3) Whom am I going to marry?

These questions begin to demand attention at the time when the youth is least prepared by judgment or experience to weigh them objectively. The amount of emotional conflict generated in a given individual is influenced by the economic security of the home and by the degree of family unity or disunity the youth has experienced. Two personality developments also give direction to their thinking. At this age the child accelerates his drive toward independence from parental supervision. Also, the teenager makes serious appraisals repeatedly of his own worth. He may draw true or mistaken conclusions concerning his traits, but the importance of his findings can be seen in the extreme sensitivity shown when a companion uncovers a wound that the youth is trying to conceal.

The manner in which these children of junior-high-age pursue the solutions to the three questions previously mentioned is a challenge both to parents and to teachers.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Within the space of forty years, the number of three-year junior high schools has grown from a scattered few to more than 4,000. The separate junior high schools now enroll more than 20 per cent of the youth attending all secondary schools. One of the reasons for this rapid growth has been the increasing acceptance of the educational uniqueness of the early adolescent, the boy or girl 11-14 years of age. This article will be interesting to junior-high people because it casts some light on the questions junior-high pupils often ask. The author was vice-principal, Junior High School No. 4, Trenton, New Jersey. He retired in June.*

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They come to this age with well-developed convictions and beliefs in religion, politics, and social relationships, and with a means of communicating these to others (language). The behavior traits and attitudes which determine character are already deep seated. Many youths, due to peculiar emphasis on some facet of development or to family prejudices, are already slight deviants from the normal.

However, the solution to the first question, "What am I going to believe?" is never final so long as life exists. Teachers will be more effective if they treat these pupils, in spite of their wrong convictions and antisocial behavior traits, with the respect due them. They hate to have what they call "personal" exposed in front of their peers. They become tense, go on the defensive, and build up resentment against the teacher. But in private, if the proper rapport has been established, the child will accept even harsher criticism. Respect for the teacher will grow. The desirable attitudes toward conformity are more likely to develop, which is the essence of good discipline.

The quandary with which youth faces the question, "What am I going to believe?" is revealed in the wistfulness expressed in "I wish I knew whom to believe" or the despondency shown in "You can't trust anyone; even your best friends betray you." It is too much to expect a child to change his views and habits as the result of one interview. It takes a series of lessons to aid the child in learning a year's work in mathematics. In like manner it takes suggestions given over a period of time to correct wrong concepts and antisocial behavior patterns. Eventually with the aid of the maturing process the suggestions fall in place like the pieces of a picture puzzle and the child gets a new view of his own personality.

Parents, too, need to keep from being unduly upset when a person with a strong emotional appeal temporarily leads the

youth upon a tangent from the accepted culture of the family. Wise counseling and patient watching for appropriate guidance are to be preferred to prohibitive directives and repressive penalties.

There are a few fortunate individuals who know what they are going to do before they enter the junior high school. Nothing occurs in the secondary school years which makes it necessary for them to revise their decisions. Most junior-high students however, are much concerned about this second question, "What am I going to do?" They do not consider themselves the carefree, happy-go-lucky individuals referred to by their elders. One worried teen-ager, reminded of this adult point of view during a conference on alternate choices, fairly exploded, "That is not true!" Their philosophy on this point is well expressed in the following statement made by one of them: "Grownups can speak as they please, do as they please, and change their jobs if they want to, but we are supposed to say only nice things no matter how we feel, to do as we are told, and to go to school whether we like it or not."

This problem is modified by the economic status of the family, by the ambitions of the parents, and by the ability and personality of the youth. There is often much turning inward and searching of his own fitness. He that is easily discouraged suffers many a heartache because he may draw wrong conclusions. It is well for a teacher to remember that a troublesome child is a child with his own trouble. His rebellion in the classroom may be an expression of his own doubts and conflicts. When a youth's feelings lead him to say, "I don't know what is the matter with me," the wise parent or counselor prepares to do some sympathetic listening regardless of time or other pressing duties. If the time is not taken then, the opportunity may be lost, at least until another crisis arises. Encouraging guidance in aiding the youth to

face up to the realities of the situation should follow.

For some individuals, due to family circumstances or inability to adjust to any phase of school with profit, the question, "What am I going to do?" must be answered by the age of sixteen, or the age at which attendance at school is no longer compulsory. Opportunities are available, fortunately, for the others to revise their decisions during the higher secondary grades and beyond. Guidance by competent counselors is the key to this problem.

Except for a small percentage of the adolescents, the third question, "Whom shall I marry?" is not finally answered until some years beyond the junior-high period. However, the influence of this question and of concomitant problems on their lives cannot be denied. This is especially true of the girls. The undirected chatter of an informal group is convincing. A new motivating force, sex, is directing their energies. They spend a lot of time thinking about it. They need constant supervision and guidance in gaining experiences acceptable to society, just as at the earlier age of teething they had to learn what was proper to put into their mouths. This new factor comes at a time when the budding adolescent is striving to become more independent of his parents. Loyalty to the gang is of paramount importance, even though it be in opposition to the will of the parent.

During this period, specific problems are created for the teacher. Fights may break out frequently, there is much jealousy, and insults must be avenged. The respect of the gang must be earned and kept. They will

accept almost any dare but the dare to be called "chicken."

Fortunate is that child whose anchor is in the home. If the confidence of the child has been kept by the parent, the teen-ager will pass through this period with a minimum of turmoil. But what about the many who because of parental attitude or incompetency are deprived of this anchor? It is of no avail to tell them, "You are too young to think about such things," or "Keep your mind on your work." Neither is the security of the gang sufficient. In fact, it may lead to behavior unacceptable to society or to self. Punishment may follow. Self-respect may be lost before the adolescent understands the force that got him into this mess. All of them need the guidance of an understanding and respected adult who will consider any problem of the youth fit for discussion.

Each September the doors of the junior high schools swing open to admit another group of young people on the threshold of an important and often critical period of years. They are eager for experimentation and exploration. In a few short years they are expected to integrate themselves into a civilization which took ages for the races of men to develop. These adolescents come in a steady stream traveling as it were along paved streets toward a citadel in the center of a vast city, the repository of the accepted culture, mores, and traditions of modern society. For a time many of them choose to walk teetering on the curb, some walk with one foot in the gutter, a few fall into the gutter, but eventually nearly all learn it is safer to keep on the sidewalk.



In a primary sense, the overall mission of education in this and every other historical era is not only the perpetuation of Truth, it is the continuous liquidation of presumptions. And we shall extricate ourselves from the present precarious situation only if we have the integrity of mind to penetrate our own hypocrisy and pretension as well as that of enemies.—LLOYD P. WILLIAMS in *Peabody Journal of Education*.

# A Faculty Photo Gallery

By MARJORIE F. JOHNSON

AN ILLUSTRATED FACULTY ROSTER, or rogues' gallery, can be a pleasure and a help in a large secondary school. Have you ever wondered whether the man approaching down the hall was a fellow teacher or a parent? Have you hesitated to ask the name of the teacher sitting next to you at lunch, since you ought to know? Do you wish you knew someone from your college or home town, or someone who likes to swim and might help you with that class party? If you felt that you really knew Johnny's history teacher, might you suggest getting together to find a workable solution to Johnny's inertia in class? Had you known another teacher lived near you, could you have sent adequate lesson plans for the substitute that day you were ill?

Co-operation among faculty members, based on mutual understanding and helpfulness, is not just a matter of keeping teachers and staff happy. In a school where sincere, good rapport exists, tensions are lessened, the inexperienced know they are supported by the experienced, and each person's energies and talents are released for the most important business of all—teaching. Not only does a well-adjusted,

unified faculty produce effective teachers; its influence is felt throughout the student body, making for better discipline and good feeling among the students. This, in turn, helps learning.

In many schools enrollments are so large and physical plants so spread out that in spite of faculty meetings, smaller work groups, and social get-togethers, once school has started in the fall a teacher becomes an island unto himself. New teachers, particularly, may become isolated and sometimes inundated.

In our junior high school we are jealous of our "live and let live" attitude toward one another, and we respect our individual differences as an asset. However, we feel that co-operation among ourselves is an essential, and that it is important to recognize and know our fellow workers in order to give and receive valuable help in matters of curriculum, policy, and mutual student problems encountered throughout the year.

The idea of an illustrated roster can, of course, be adapted to the wishes and needs of a particular school faculty. Ours is a 6-foot by 4½-foot bulletin board, made by a shop teacher and covered with black construction paper, which we hang in our faculty lounge. The one hundred 5-inch by 8-inch index cards, each representing a member of our school staff, are topped by a happy, redletter caption donated by our principal: **THROUGH THESE PORTALS PASS THE CITY'S FINEST TEACHERS.**

As the most useful arrangement, the cards are in groups, separated by a two-inch space and labeled above at the start of each group. Administrators, special services (librarian, nurse, lip-reading and speech-

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Here is an idea that industry and the Navy have used effectively for some time. In the reception room and hangar deck respectively one can see a photo roster of the officers of the company and crew. Why don't schools do the same thing? Well, that's the question posed in this article. It's good public relations; that's what it is. The author is adjustment English teacher in Montgomery Junior High School, San Diego, California.*

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correction teachers, psychologist, and visiting teachers), and the secretaries fill the top row. In the other three rows faculty members are arranged by departments. Within each group, cards are placed according to the date the person came to our school.

At the top of each card is the name, including Miss or Mrs. for a woman. A photograph or snapshot, approximately 3 inches by 2¼ inches and mounted on red paper, is pasted below the name. Directly under the picture is the position held and the starting date at our school. Then, beginning at the far left of the card, comes the following information: the subject or subjects being taught; places where teacher has taught before; training, colleges and universities attended and degrees received; region of our city in which person lives; marital status; ages of children and grandchildren; home town; and hobbies. In the small remaining space on the cards, individuals have added any information they

wish, including a few family pictures. We printed this data in black ink, but of course a typewriter would be less time consuming. A schedule of classes and teachers' rooms is posted on an adjoining bulletin board.

Most of the pictures used were copies of those taken for the school annual, but when these were not available we solicited any small photographs or snapshots. The information was collected by questionnaire, explaining the project and suggesting that any item which was thought to be too personal could be left out. Cards were put up gradually, as they were finished, which added to the interest.

At the beginning of another school year we will arrange the cards according to changes in our staff. Pictures of our new teachers will be mounted on green paper for easy identification. At this time we feel our rogues' gallery will be particularly helpful, but it has already definitely proved its worth.



## Theory and Classroom Practices

We still have a great distance to go in finding ways to translate the findings of clinical and social psychology into classroom practice. Hence there are many individuals, the present writer included, who continually find themselves falling back on the traditional and teacher-centered educational methods of lecture, assignment, examination, etc. What we obviously need is a great deal more classroom experimentation in approaches that attempt to translate research-oriented theory into classroom practices that are consistent with its democratic implications. I refer here to the efforts of individual teachers to find ways to improve learning in their classrooms, as well as to the more rigorous experiments of the educational or social psychologist.

It will not be easy to conduct such experimentation. Laymen and colleagues alike whose learning theories are essentially traditional will object to any approach that to them seems inconsistent with common sense. And the recent attacks on education

have not created a climate that encourages much experimentation, informal or otherwise. Such attacks increase anxiety, defensiveness, and insecurity, which in turn foster a resurgence of traditionalism. But it is easy to place the blame on others. When the opportunity for experimentation presents itself, our chief problem will be ourselves.

Our first task will be that of becoming aware of the ways in which our practice is at odds with our democratic ideals, as well as the principles that have evolved from research findings. This is a task that takes considerable insight and self-understanding, but it is a task that must be resolved if we are to develop learning theories and teaching practices that are more effective. If we are able to face our own deficiencies, then we will be able to move on to the creative thinking and improvisation that constitute the preliminary phases of experimentation with new methods.—HENRY CLAY LINDGREN in *Educational Leadership*.

# Some Key Sources of Error in TEST ADMINISTRATION

By HERMAN J. PETERS

THE CONTINUUM OF A TESTING PROGRAM begins with a consideration of the need for testing and selection of tests and ends with whatever use is made of the test results. Viewing this continuum as a carpenter's level, let us look at test administration as the fulcrum on which to balance the selection of a test at one end of the level and the use of the test at the other end. The psychology of evaluation rests, precariously at times, on the fulcrum of proper test administration.

Let us keep in mind Downie's five principles of psychological evaluation when we

look at sources of error in test administration.\*

1. The principle of readiness can be enhanced when the student understands, values, and accepts the objectives of evaluation.
2. The type of evaluative instruments used often gives emphasis to the types of learning activities in which the pupil should engage.
3. Research substantiates the fact that individuals learn better when appraised of their progress.
4. Tests are one source of promoting motivation of the pupil.
5. Because a test is easily identifiable to the pupil in his total school program, testing affords the learner a knowledgeable way of actively participating in an evaluative active procedure.

This article has been prompted after working with a considerable number of teachers in several parts of the country during the last several years. The errors described are not isolated references, but rather each seemed to occur often enough to warrant inclusion of it in the discussion. The too often made assumption that selection and use are the principal focal points in a testing program is unwarranted in light of this writer's experiences. Test administration is the factor in the delicate balance between what the test is supposed to do and what the test in fact does. It should be kept in mind that there are a number of aspects to proper test adminis-

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The use of standardized tests is increasing, both for internal and for external use. By internal we mean those tests of intelligence, reading comprehension, and mental maturity employed for guidance and placement purposes within the school. The external tests refer to aptitude and achievement tests offered by National Merit, General Motors, College Entrance Examination Board, National Honor Society, or by state testing agencies. Not only are tests growing in popularity and public acceptance but they are increasingly requiring that school staffs become more discriminating in regard to the character and purpose of many kinds of standardized tests. And this is by no means an easy chore. We suggest that you read this article carefully if you are interested in acquiring an understanding of frailties in test administration. The author is professor of education, the Ohio State University, Columbus.*

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\* N. M. Downie, *Fundamentals of Measurement: Techniques and Practices* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 9-13.

tration. The purpose of this paper is to discuss some of the key sources of error in test administration.

*Approach.* One source of error in test administration is an emphasis on the negative aspects of testing. To inform pupils that the test is an unusually crucial school experience and that some do not succeed is a sadistic approach to help the pupil become ready for the testing. This error is found more often in the secondary and college setting than in the elementary school. Who has not heard a test administrator announce, "Look on both sides of you. One of you will not reach the success mark on these tests." It goes without question that this is a grievous error in test approach. A test situation is not a place for a sermon on the virtues of long study hours and hard work. Pupils can be informed that a standardized test will be given today or in a few days. In the lower elementary grades, perhaps the "games" approach is best. The teacher may announce that some games are going to be played and that each child will wish to do his best. If the proper climate is not present during the test administration, doubt certainly arises as to the validity of the results when compared to standardized data.

*Test Skill.* To the teacher in a school with an excellent testing program, it may seem unbelievable that for many boys and girls, a standardized test is in itself a novel experience. The 1958 American Association for the Advancement of Science report on "Identification and Guidance of Able Students" states (p. 31) that "some 40,000 of the 110,000 elementary schools in this nation are one-teacher schools." This evidence alone seems sufficient to emphasize the point that, in all probability, many pupils progress through a number of grades before having standardized test experience. A second source of error in test administration lies in the question of the validity of results for boys and girls who are not thoroughly familiar with standardized test pro-

cedures. The results may reflect, in part, ability, or lack of it, in test procedure rather than ability in the test content.

This reviewer has encountered teachers who in their busy day dismiss any practice in procedures necessary in giving a standardized test. These teachers move hastily to the principal instrument. With a considerable variation in standardized test format and answer pads, skill in test procedures must be insured, not taken for granted. In those tests which have practice exercises, the tester should move with caution and deliberate speed, else the time gained here will be lost in doubtful results. The importance of this point is emphasized over and over when this writer administers standardized tests to his graduate classes in guidance. Too many testers assume the student knows *how to take a test*.

*Directions.* Inaccurately followed or haphazardly presented directions are errors in test administration which contain dangerously potent errors for accurate test results. Directions modified by the tester may invalidate any sound comparison of the results of the test with the norms. Just recently a teacher told me that "if the pupils do not understand the directions, I modify the directions so as to help the pupils." Although obviously sincere in her attempt, this teacher violated the explicit directions of the standardized test being used at the time. To follow directions accurately, the tester should study them well in advance of the testing date. In fact, in the privacy of one's office or home, it helps to practice aloud the test directions. If necessary, this gives the tester the opportunity to underline or to make key marks which serve as cues for the proper announcement of test directions to the pupils. Also, too many teachers rely on variations in type in the test manual for a guideline in giving a test. This is helpful but additional cues, suited to each tester, seem necessary.

*Timing.* Although timing is subsumed under directions, this facet of test adminis-

tration seems to present a source of considerable error. In a guidance testing workshop conducted by this writer, at least a third of nearly two hundred teachers indicated that they varied or guessed at the timing of subtests on a well-known standardized test. How many pupils are "labeled" on the basis of test results obtained from tests improperly administered because of timing errors? The cumulative effect of timing discrepancies in a series of subtests can certainly be a source of error in the later use of the test results. Timing in standardized testing is the *sine qua non* for comparing local results with national norms. If a stop watch is not available, each tester could improve his timing accuracy by jotting down the beginning time and paying strict attention to the end limit of the allowed time span. The tests have been standardized in terms of the time spans indicated.

**Group Size.** At the adolescent and adult levels, tests may be administered effectively to large groups of persons. At the lower elementary levels it is probably wise to test in small groups of ten to fifteen pupils. It is not only that the test situation provides a potential observation post for the teacher but also that the test situation should be surveyed for deviant pupil test behavior. A pencil quickly replaced may help a pupil continue with the test.

Proctors should be used when the group size is large, perhaps more than one hundred. Proctors should not hover over one or two students. Quietly the proctors should move about the group. Of course, other than during the explanatory part of the test, no help is given during the test proper. The small-group approach to testing in the elementary school allows the teacher ample opportunity to check on the progress of pupils whose adjustment to school situations has not matured to the necessary level for group testing.

**Guessing.** Not infrequently a pupil about to take a standardized test will ask

if he should guess. In some tests guessing will not materially affect the score; in other tests, it may be a source of serious error. The topic of guessing is debatable in terms of advice to be given. Often guessing is not pure guessing but it is the best hunch on the basis of poorly remembered information. This is a positive guess, in that it differs from a pure guess where the pupil actually knows next to nothing on the question asked. Negative guessing may be defined as indiscriminate marking of answers with little or no attention to the question. This latter type may involve ethical questions.

While no firm rule can be given to pupils, the tester can state that if no extra scoring penalties are attached to errors, a blank space will surely be wrong while a positive guess may be right. Each tester has to study the current situation in terms of the test to be administered, especially as to test scoring and the development of proper attitudes by pupils in taking this particular test.

**Follow-through.** Follow-through in test administration includes scoring. Errors in scoring may have profound influence on the pupil. One example is sufficiently illustrative. A scorer's computational error reduced a student's score by ten points on an intelligence test. If all other aspects of the test and the individual had been considered, the error may have been classified as minor. However, when the error throws a pupil in the average intelligence quotient classification of 108 as against 118 and when cumulative records are used (and this is an assumption), the score becomes a label of considerable magnitude.

Adequate provision must be made for the checking of scores on each pupil's test. If the school has decided to have a phase or phases of a testing program, then a necessary part of the procedures is an adequate check on the accuracy of the computational work which is necessary to determine test scores.

*Summary*

This paper has attempted to underscore the necessity for sound test administration in an effective school standardized testing program. Pinpointed were sources of potential errors of significance in the results. These were test approach, pupil test skill, direction giving, timing, group size, guessing, and follow-through. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 states, in part, its support of state plans for

testing for "a program for testing students in the public secondary schools, and if authorized by law in other secondary schools of such State to identify students with outstanding aptitudes and ability, and the means of testing, which will be utilized in carrying out such a program. . . ."

If proper use is to be made of this historic support for guidance testing, then tests must be administered with expert preciseness.



## To Teach or Not to Teach

By J. JEROME SCHLOSSER

Maplewood, New Jersey

The day may come (but not too soon)  
When, on some pleasant afternoon  
As classes close across the land,  
Each teacher finds that all he planned  
Was covered fully; no time lost  
Throughout the day (keep fingers crossed)  
For clubs,  
    assemblies,  
    air raid drills,  
By sale of pennants, rings, and frills,  
By interruptions by the phone,  
    Announcements,  
    distributions, lone  
    arrivals late to class who lack  
    excuses so you send them back,  
No one departing for the nurse  
    for shots, or colds, or even worse,  
    for guidance counsel,  
    choir or band,  
    or parent's visit—by command.  
A day completed without waste  
    of time for lessons twice retraced.  
A day like this would be a boon.  
That day may come (but not too soon).



# Interior Marks of Great Teachers

By HOWARD K. HOLLAND

"WHAT YOU ARE SPEAKS SO LOUD I CAN'T HEAR HOW YOU TEACH . . ." seems a proper paraphrase of Emerson's famous lines about character when speaking of teachers. Over a century ago this eloquent Massachusetts teacher, minister, poet, and essayist was re-emphasizing the importance of self-reliance, heroism, and scholarship in American life. He was stating a fundamental law of the good life: that fine persons have fine inner lives.

That teachers must take especial care of their interior characteristics is a truth we have de-emphasized lately. Perhaps this is the expected result of our progress in defining the good teacher in his exterior behavior. Now that we know that we should "use developmental principles," "maintain good atmosphere in the classroom," "plan effectively," "use various methods," and do

a variety of other things—all overt in nature—perhaps it is time to apply the Concord sage's beliefs of the inner life to teachers.

This is easier said than done. Science can't help us nor can we find survey procedures which will reveal the exact meaning of quality in character. There have been great teachers, however. Tradition records their characteristics, and certainly we can profit from their lives. The interior marks of such masters include these facts:

*They are humble and quiet.* They neither shout nor do they argue. It was said of St. Thomas Aquinas that he treated his bitterest antagonists with deference and reserve. He was so quiet during the years of his study that his classmates named him "The Dumb Ox." Yet when he taught, the simplicity and rationality of the truths he presented made him the most sought after and loved of all teachers in Europe. He was one of the first to prove that humble teachers let subject matter speak for itself.

*They are not anxious.* Being convinced of the intrinsic rightness of their vocation, they proceed without anxiety to do what is best for those given them to teach.

Pestalozzi, the father of modern elementary education, was in desperate poverty and over fifty years of age when he made his decision to be a schoolmaster. Thereafter he took charge of the orphanage at Stanz and then established his school at Burgdorf. Without worry and with confidence in the educational principles he was discovering, this genius kept his aim fixed on helping each child develop a sense of worth and dignity. Success was inevitable. His sound principles and personal industry precluded worry.

*They believe in perfection.* Knowing that they, themselves, are far from perfect

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Edith R. Shaw is dead now. But we remember her as a great teacher. It didn't matter that her subject was Latin. She would have been a great teacher in any subject in her repertory. She loved to teach, she inspired her students, she always had time to talk to us before or after school. Yet she was firm, resolute, faithful to her task. But she was friendly, courteous, and kind too. It would take pages to write of Miss Shaw's belief in the goodness of people and her great work.*

*This article is not about Edith R. Shaw but about the characteristics of great teachers.*

*It is not customary for The Clearing House to publish an inspirational article like this. But we liked it. The author is professor of education at William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia.*

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and that their students are too, great teachers nevertheless believe it possible to achieve perfection. They take virtue seriously. They strive for goodness in their daily lives and give direction and help to their children in reaching for perfection.

John Amos Comenius had no less ambition than to give to each of his pupils all knowledge. The teaching of universal wisdom was the means by which he intended to cause all persons to develop to the full extent of their capacities. ". . . Seeds of knowledge, virtue and piety" are found in all children, he believed. These could be cultivated.

This seventeenth century teaching giant was bishop of the Moravian church, a tireless writer of textbooks, a dreamer of education for all men. His driving force was the conviction that all men are brothers, that each has the capacity to become perfect. Each must be shown his vaulted possibilities. Each teacher must pave the way for self-realization in all pupils.

*Their true motives are charitable.* Great teachers don't look upon their duties as ends. They view their vocation as a means to the end of giving themselves to their students. William Lyon Phelps is reported to have said that if he was a man of money, he gladly would have paid for the privilege of teaching his classes. So it is with others. In days when schoolteaching was a calling, prospective teachers found it easier to think first of what they could give. Personal returns were not forgotten; good teachers just relegated such matters to their proper subordinate place.

Charity is the highest virtue and it

means dearness or love. It is remarkable how consistently great teachers have always filled their days with acts of charity: acts showing devotion to truth; kindnesses revealing regard for students.

Booker T. Washington, for example, helped support almost as many students as were enrolled in his school. Horace Mann organized conventions and edited journals to the end that schoolteachers could replace superstition with knowledge. Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke Female Seminary with the purpose of giving to many girls the educational benefits which before had been enjoyed only by a few.

*They are religious.* Without exception all great teachers live deeply religious lives. Their intellects as well as their hearts are anchored in firm faith. They believe in the existence of a spiritual reality greater than man; they believe in worship; they believe in prayer.

St. Thomas Aquinas spent more time on his knees than he did dictating to his three secretaries the profusion of great works which as yet are unequaled in pure scholarship. Never did he begin a lecture nor start a day's writing without first praying for wisdom and eloquence.

Of course these inner beliefs and activities can't be observed so easily as the many outer acts we are taught to perform. But their presence in good teachers is well known to students and friends. Truly fine teachers of all times have the same characteristics. Indeed, today as in the past, the only reliable marks of great teaching personalities are the rich qualities of their interior selves.

Teachers and all those who are engaged in the educative process—need to do more homework on philosophy and politics and they need to gain new insights into the virtue of unfixed ideas.—WILLIAM H. FISHER in *Education*.

## Events & Opinion

**ENTER THE ROBOT TEACHER:** Teaching machines are here. In fact, Dr. B. F. Skinner of Harvard, a developer of the electronic devices, predicts that these machines will be in common usage within five years. The machines ask questions of a student. If a correct answer is provided, the machine offers new information. If a wrong answer is given, the machine moves back to simpler material. With such devices available, it is believed that pupils will learn in one hour what it takes a human teacher a whole day to teach them in laborious classroom instruction.

While the machine teaches the pupil at his own pace to add, subtract, read, write, spell, and do other factual tasks, the teacher will be doing what he has often been criticized for not doing. According to Dr. Skinner he will be teaching the refinements of education, the social aspects of learning, and other things creative.

The implications of the machines are far reaching. If they can relieve the teacher from the labor of so-called rote teaching and permit him, instead, to devote some of the classroom time to creative endeavors, the cost of these machines will be a minor factor. These machines should not be looked upon as a replacement for the teacher, but, rather, a most useful assistant.

**TRANSMUTING VALUES:** From time to time we have included in these columns remarks by Dr. Max Lerner, whom we regard as one of the more rational critics of education and other forms of human endeavor. While addressing a conference at Stanford University a short time ago, he expressed concern over the attitudes and values which have meaning to the high-school boy and girl. While we are sure the words of Dr. Lerner may be simply a reaffirmation of our own beliefs, they are well worth reading:

"We can have few illusions about the kind of cultural values that have come to dominate the teenage society of our high schools. Recent studies of cross-section high schools in the nation come up with some depressing results. The image of a future career is more likely to build around the great athlete than the great scientist. The students with the greatest peer-group prestige are not those who are good at their studies, but the football or basketball hero, the boy that the girls go for, the best-dressed girl, the cheer-leader girl. This poses the role for the teacher. I assume that our young people still have a hunger for greatness of some sort, but it takes twisted forms. Only the teacher can untwist them, and give the hunger for greatness a release that will direct it toward creative channels. The teacher cannot be simply a passive instrument for transmitting the shoddy values of the culture. Instead of transmitting them, he must somehow transmute them."

**THE EDUCATED MAN:** What is an educated man? Over the centuries scholars have pondered this question and, still, solutions are being sought. G. K. Saiyidain, secretary of the Ministry of Education in India, posed three test questions as a formula for determining the extent of an educated man: (1) Can you entertain an idea? (2) Can you entertain the other fellow? (3) Can you entertain yourself? He feels that a school which turns out students who can supply the affirmative answer to all three questions can pride itself on being on the road to education. A report in the New York *Times* quotes Mr. Saiyidain as saying that people today do not speak very much to one another and when they do, they do not often speak clearly or meaningfully. Not only is there a need today for a revival of the art of conversation, but the same holds true for the art of read-

ing. While people today have more books than ever at their disposal, "most of them neither know what to read or how to read."

Education must seek to counter these trends. The Indian official believes that this may be possible if the schools do far more than merely impart information to students. Far more important is the ability to search for knowledge and the wisdom to use knowledge. To provide such education would require a "courageous and imaginative reconstruction" of the curriculum. This new curriculum should contain more world history and geography and more emphasis on international affairs than is presently afforded in school. It should give greater attention to the critical study of the "living problems of American democracy," and inculcate in students "greater sensitiveness to the basic issues of freedom."

These thoughts by the secretary of the Ministry of Education in India cannot be refuted easily. They are in harmony with the thinking of all educators. And, yet, it is of interest to note that most visitors to our shores who comment on the educational scene follow a similar pattern of expression. It appears that they are more internationally minded than we may be; consequently, they take us to task for what is felt to be a provincial character of our education. Yes, they may be right.

**SCHOOL REFORMS PREDICTED:** On the basis of changes already found in a few American schools, Dr. Paul Woodring, consultant for the Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation, prognosticates a dozen reforms in American education. These changes, which he feels will achieve a dramatic improvement in the quality of education, were disclosed at the education workshop held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Chamber of Commerce:

1. Educational television will bring some of the best teachers of the nation to millions of children.

2. The present ladder system will be replaced by a more flexible arrangement so that each child can advance at his own best rate, probably in an ungraded primary unit that will absorb the kindergarten.

3. At the secondary level, students will be grouped on the basis of ability in each separate subject.

4. The content of some subjects, notably mathematics and science, will be greatly altered and brought up to date.

5. Some of the larger high schools will be broken up into smaller units of about 400 students each. Several of these units may be placed on a single campus and all will use the same gymnasium and auditorium. Some library and laboratory facilities may be shared.

6. Some large, cumbersome administrative units, such as that of New York City, may be broken up into smaller units, each with its own board.

7. Some of the smaller schools will be consolidated.

8. There will be a great deal of experimentation with class size.

9. College enrollments will double in the next ten or fifteen years.

10. There will be an acute shortage of college teachers, and this will lead to new methods of instruction, and perhaps a more limited curriculum. Faculty salaries will rise dramatically.

11. Teacher education will be absorbed into the mainstream of American higher education. All teachers will get a liberal education plus a year that combines professional preparation with an extended internship in the public schools.

12. The self-contained classroom will gradually disappear and several varieties of team teaching will emerge. The team will include a co-ordinating leader, a career teacher, a classroom teacher, interns or apprentices, teacher specialists, and teacher aides and secretaries to relieve teachers of nonprofessional duties.

JOSEPH GREEN

# Tenth-Grade English for Slow Learners

By  
GUY L. FOSTER

TEN YEARS AGO when our school organized special classes in English for slow learners, there was a scramble for suitable instructional materials. The textbooks used in regular classes were inadequate, because the vocabulary was too difficult and because the content lacked appeal for slow learners. After considerable searching, we became convinced that while there was plenty of material for remedial reading, there was almost no material for slow learners in English at the high-school level.

For slow-learner classes we accepted students whose I.Q. scores fell between 75 and 90 although there were a few whose I.Q. scores were below 75. The reading scores of most of the students showed that they were reading at fifth- or sixth-grade level. That was approximately where they should have been reading according to their ability. Remedial instruction was not what they needed. It left them more confused than helped, because it was intended to help students catch up, and that tended to advance the performance of our students to a pace

beyond their normal ability to achieve. If the work had not caused a speed-up, it would not have been remedial. Since slow learners are not retarded, they need a well-rounded course of study, not a special course in reading.

During the first few years we used the best materials we could find. Of course there were considerable fumbling and experimenting, mostly on the trial-and-error level. During this period, however, two convictions were developing: (1) we must know more about the abilities, attitudes, and work habits of slow learners; and (2) since suitable materials were not available, the teacher must develop them.

First, we had to know for what kind of students we would develop materials. From careful observation of the work habits of our slow-learning students, from the quality of work they did, and from the available literature in the field, we began to form opinions about the nature of the slow learner.

Of great importance, we found, is the fact that slow learners tend to have few interests. For that reason, it is often difficult to arouse their interest in purely academic subjects. However, it is a mistake to assume that if a student doesn't do well academically, he will probably do well in learning activities requiring manual skills. The opposite is the case. Although there are many exceptions, students who are poor academically will probably be poor manually.

The course of study for the slow learner, we decided, must be graded to the level of his ability so that he can do good, honest work and be honestly rewarded for it; and

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*CH's consultant on language arts, Dr. Arno Jewett, writes that this article's emphasis on usage and language is excellent. His recommendation, plus the interest of secondary-school teachers in reading materials for the delayed or slower reader, convinced us of the desirability of publishing this article. The writer is teacher of English, Phoenix Union High School, Phoenix, Arizona.*

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so that there need be no shame about it when promotion time comes.

Since suitable materials were not on the market, we set out to devise our own. Our source was the students themselves. We examined hundreds and hundreds of written papers to find out the things that the students needed. The criterion of need was based on the things the students were trying to do but were doing poorly or incorrectly. Since space does not permit a detailed explanation, what follows is only a brief summary. The method employed is neither new nor original.

First, we began compiling a list of spelling words from paragraphs written by the students. The work is still going on, although the spelling list now contains nearly 300 words. Students often misspell words carelessly; therefore caution was necessary lest we include words that the students could already spell. Words of special application, such as names of persons or places, were not included. No measure of frequency was used, but no word was added to the list unless the instructor felt sure that several students had misspelled or would misspell the word.

At the same time we began an exhaustive analysis of student themes to determine what we could do to help the students do better the things that they were already attempting in their writing. We found, for instance, that to do correctly the very simple type of paragraph writing for which they were experiencing a need, they ought to know how to handle correctly seven of the most common uses of the comma, exclusive of those in letter writing. The seven are the comma in writing dates, addresses, direct address, series, introductory expressions like *yes*, *no*, and *well*, parenthetical expressions, and appositive expressions. Direct address, parenthetical expressions, and appositive expressions are the ones that the students find the most difficult to learn, but we included them in the course because students do write them voluntarily

and ought to know how to punctuate them correctly.

When the learning areas were determined, we devised work sheets which we thought would be definite, objective, and at the same time interesting. The students, themselves, had a hand in many of the changes that followed. Their comments were invaluable. Finally the work lessons were compiled, used experimentally, and made ready to put into the hands of the students.\*

There were eleven major learning areas. The figure in parentheses indicates the number of times the item is presented, re-taught, and reviewed. The eleven areas are: sentence sense (7); basal parts (23); seven comma uses (14); prepositional phrases (19); words often confused (12); common verbs (16); uses of the apostrophe (14); fifteen uses of capital letters (8); writing conversation (9); common errors in writing (7); and letter writing (4).

*Basic English Exercises* has been used two years now with a great deal of success and satisfaction. One reason for its success is that it is suited to the students' needs and abilities because it was drawn from the students' own classroom experiences. Moreover, use of it makes it easily possible to keep the work definite and objective so that the student always knows what is expected of him.

The preceding discussion has dealt entirely with the course of study in language. But slow learners must also develop further their ability to get thought from the printed page. Each student chooses from the classroom library a book that he is interested in reading. Almost two periods each week are spent in reading silently from that book until at last the student has finished it. In the room library are more than a hundred books. In difficulty they range from the very easy, like *Davy Crockett* (Parks), to the more difficult, like *Trap-Lines North* (Meador). There are

\* Guy L. Foster, *Basic English Exercises*, 1955.

books to appeal to practically every interest. Each week the student uses the last fifteen minutes of the first reading period for writing. He writes one or two paragraphs in which he either tells something he has read, or comments on what he has read.

A few days later the paper is returned to the student. In the margin are notations of errors that the student can be expected to understand and correct. To a great extent such corrections keep pace with the work in the workbook, *Basic English Exercises*. To provide adequate supervision, classtime is used to correct the errors and to rewrite the theme. The original theme and the revision are finally stapled together and become a part of the student's file.

But the reading program as described above is not enough. An effort must be made to pass on to the slow learner some appreciation of the masterpieces that have become a part of our great literary heritage. Even though the student is unable to read such selections himself, he can get much of value from them if they are read aloud, explained, and discussed by the teacher.

The slow learner is capable of understanding the basic ideas in *Julius Caesar*, for instance. He can understand (1) why the Roman people feared dictators; (2) why they feared and distrusted Caesar when they were told that he intended to establish himself king; (3) that people today have to wrestle with the problem of leaders who might become too powerful; (4) that it is not unusual for men to be motivated by envy, as was Cassius; and (5) that in every country there are high-minded, patriotic men like Brutus. These are concepts within the range of his language development.

That which follows is a brief description of the procedure that may be used in teaching *Julius Caesar* to sophomores in a class for slow learners.

The general objectives are: (1) to develop in the student some appreciation of good literature through the play *Julius Caesar*;

(2) to show that the problem of dealing with dictators is just as great today as it was in Caesar's time; and (3) to show that Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is truly modern literature and has meaning for us today.

No attempt is made to have the student know quotable passages, interpret difficult lines, or understand special vocabulary. Emphasis is on plot, character study, and the play as good literature. The student first learns the names of the leading characters. He must be able to pronounce the names readily, possibly know how to spell them correctly, and know how the main characters are aligned in the play.

Actual work on the play follows study questions which carry the story along. The teacher paraphrases important passages and explains less important parts to bring out the answers to the questions. Typical questions are: (1) As the play opens, how powerful is Caesar? (2) How are Caesar's enemies in Rome treated? (3) What does Caesar's desire for an heir suggest? (4) How does Cassius feel about Caesar? (5) Why does Cassius want Brutus on his side?

For their literary value, some choice passages should be read without paraphrasing. Cassius' long speech in the first part of Act I, scene 2, is an example. In that speech the interest is high because Cassius is beginning to "whet" Brutus against Caesar. After the student has been prepared for the funeral scene, he is permitted to see that scene as portrayed in an eighteen-minute film distributed by the British Information Service.

Frequent reviews are necessary and work periods are not more than fifteen or twenty minutes long each day. Short work periods help to guard against taking the play too fast, and at the same time permit other regular activities of the class to continue.

The teacher of slow learners may find it possible to use the foregoing procedure in teaching such selections as *Silas Marner*, "The Coming of Arthur," and "Gareth and Lynette."

# Military Obligations of Youth

By WILLIAM R. LOUGHERY

ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES of education is said to be "learning to do better the things you will have to do anyway." Making a decision about the way to fulfill his military obligation is certainly something which faces every young man of high-school age, especially in these times. Because there are so many options and so many changes in the laws and regulations, it would seem incumbent upon every high school to find a good solution to the guidance task of providing correct and current information in this important area.

The Selective Service Law has been in effect since 1940 (except for a seventeen-month period between 1947 and 1948), and as long as Congress continues to extend the life of this law high-school students need to be kept informed of the military provisions that will affect their futures. The fact that a young man is required by federal law to register at the nearest Selective Service board on his "eighteenth birthday or five

days thereafter" may be common knowledge to most administrators but, unless a systematic arrangement is established for passing such information along to students at regular intervals, there is a danger that some of our high-school boys may not "get the word." More is needed, however, than a mere statement of law regarding registration. An explanation of military obligations and opportunities as well as of rights and options involved is also necessary. Dispensing such information is just as much the obligation of a high school as explaining the need for taking College Board examinations.

Recruiting officials representing all branches of the armed services, both regular and reserve, are constantly seeking opportunities to address assemblies of boys. Although what they have to say may be of great importance, there is always a question as to how and when satisfactory arrangements can be made with a minimum disruption of the school session. Fairness requires equal time to all Services and yet if such talks are not kept to a minimum (with captive audiences) parents may accuse the schools of permitting a kind of "brainwashing." There are some school administrators who refuse to release any time to representatives of the military because they feel that it is not well spent; on the other hand there are schools that provide time whenever the request is made.

In some of the larger cities, several high schools join together and hold an armed forces convention. Representatives of all five services are invited to participate and an entire morning is devoted to the project. Seniors and/or juniors convene in an auditorium for a keynote address and are then issued schedules that assign them to a series of five periods (each in a different room)

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*All senior high schools face the common problem of keeping their boys informed about serving their country's defense needs. After graduation, should a boy enlist in the branch of military service that most appeals to him? Should he sign up for a reserve program? Should he wait to be drafted by Selective Service? Whatever choice he makes, one thing is certain: sooner or later he knows that he cannot avoid performing his stint of required military service.*

*The author describes the military guidance provided for boys in Rogers High School, Newport, Rhode Island. He is director of guidance in that school, a three-year comprehensive senior high school of 1,250 enrollment.*

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where thirty-minute talks are presented by recruiters. This system does accomplish the purpose of disseminating information, but there is so much opportunity for repetition and duplication that issues become clouded, and frequently the net result to the student is a study of military personalities.

Over a period of years at Rogers we have developed a plan which enables us to provide this important guidance service most satisfactorily. Fundamentally the plan boils down to a series of four weekly twenty-minute assemblies for junior and senior boys. Of course it could be adapted to any system which would provide the necessary time but, since our daily schedule provides each student with a twenty-minute study period at noon, this is the time that we scheduled for the meetings. Here is the way we have been handling the task:

(1) The first meeting is used to provide general information. The principal explains the purpose of the meeting and announces the dates and topics to be discussed at the next three sessions. He then turns the program over to the guidance director. With the aid of a flannel board (the type used by Navy recruiters) he covers such general topics as: responsibility for registration, obligated service, active duty enlistments, career opportunities, ready and stand-by reserve classifications, and the need for completing high school. Each student is issued an information sheet which lists all the possible plans currently in force in all the services, with the time allotment required for each plan—in active service, ready reserve, and stand-by reserve.

(2) The second meeting is conducted by a member of the Selective Service board, who discusses classifications, deferments, factors affecting availability, and the current odds on "being drafted." A short question period is included.

(3) During the third session the commanding officers of local reserve units are introduced, and each is given two minutes in which to point out one or two high

lights of his particular branch of the service. This gives the boys a chance to become acquainted with the local leaders. Each student is issued an information sheet on which are included the names of the reserve units, the place and time when drills are held, and the telephone number and name of each commanding officer. Time for questions is included.

(4) Regular recruiters for each of the different branches of the services are given two minutes each at the fourth meeting. They explain the advantages of enlisting in their particular branches and also include information on obtaining commissions. There is no attempt to tell all there is to know about the services but rather an opportunity for the students to become acquainted with the recruiters. An information sheet is distributed containing the name of each recruiter, his office location, telephone number, and hours of availability for interviews. A question period is included here also.

During the short time allotted to this project the boys were made aware of the existence of Selective Service laws and the manner in which they personally would be affected. They saw regulars and reserves in uniform and were encouraged by all to "shop around" before making any decisions. They were also furnished with specific up-to-the-minute information in reference form. Every boy in attendance knew when and where to go to get more detailed information—and he knew the name of the person who could give it to him.

We like this administrative technique for "passing the word" because:

1. It can be conducted without disrupting classwork.
2. It is easy to administer.
3. It involves short meeting periods (twenty minutes).
4. It does not allow time for boring repetition.
5. It is possible to treat all branches of the service equitably.

6. It does not allow time for high-pressure presentations.
7. It provides time between meetings to digest and discuss topics.
8. It provides an opportunity to become acquainted with all the leaders.
9. It gives the military leaders an opportunity to hear each other.
10. It has the approval of the military leaders; it satisfies their needs.
11. It provides current and correct information for those who need it most.
12. It enables the school to provide an important guidance service in a manner which is most appreciated by the students involved.



## Professionalism on the Wane

Looking back at the kinds of teachers I have met in 35 years as teacher, supervisor, examiner and university trainer of teachers, I seem to see a steady deterioration in the caliber of the teaching personnel, the quality of the teaching process, the morale standards of teachers and the level of education in our public schools. Social conditions, pay schedules, population changes, are not entirely responsible. Something has happened within the very fiber of people entering the teaching field that is very different from the teachers of a generation or so ago.

We cannot bring about improvement until we make a close analysis of the situation and then proceed to remedy the wrong. My comments may seem inopportune at this time because of the shortage of personnel. I feel they are pertinent, however, if we are to plan a design of selecting teachers that will give us the best type. . . .

As I look about, I find each teacher hurrying from one job to another. Some actually hold down four jobs. Their whole day is divided into segments of time for different jobs. This job gives them so much money. The second job gives them more, the third still more. These jobs make them so fatigued that they are hardly able to devote themselves to the job at hand, teaching. How can they, when they barely have time to think? What is left of them for their true profession of teaching?

The inadequate pay scales are doing irreparable harm to the children. Yet, they are not the entire answer. Many who are teaching should never have secured a teaching license because they do not really know what the teaching task is. A major fault also lies in the selection of teachers and in the training at teacher training institutions. Much

higher types of study and intellectual power should be prerequisite for degrees than are now set down. Teachers should be scholars with a fine command of the language and with the skill of presenting subject matter not only correctly but dramatically.

City examinations for teaching licenses should be much more difficult and should take more time. Requirements should be upgraded. Unless there is an immediate improvement in the examinations for teaching licenses, we will have a rather low caliber of education given to our children for some time to come. More people should be interested in upgrading teaching in their several departments in each school. Too many rest secure on their permanent licenses by actually atrophying each year, instead of gaining greater power.

While higher salaries will prove a boon, I venture to say that if you increased the salaries twofold there would still be an inferior type of teacher in our schools. We need scholars. We need real teachers. The task can be begun today in our schools if a few will bestir themselves and do something professional. Let a few real teachers take over a monthly meeting and put on a dynamic discussion. Let us talk at lunch about something of a more elevating nature than gossip, T.V., jokes. Let us polish our English and not be ashamed of speaking it correctly, instead of using colloquialisms. Let us write for professional magazines. Let us join P.T.A. discussions, civic groups. Let us write good books.

Let us really earn the prestige we clamor for by our actions and not by the size of an educational budget mandating higher wages.—MARY R. MUL-LINS in *Intercom*.



# Evaluative Attitudes of Science Teachers

By  
CARL J. KLEYENSTEUBER

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION frequently is the scapegoat for deficiencies in the high-school science program. Emphasis on method, say the critics, results in poorly prepared teachers. But is professional education being properly evaluated? Does it contribute something to the learning situation which is overlooked, something which is as vitally important as content to achievement in science?

If the assumption is valid that the personalities of individuals influence classroom learning, then it is important that the evaluative attitudes of teachers be examined. Is there a dominant attitude which is characteristic of science teachers? Is there a relationship between the relative strength of attitude and the number of credits earned in professional education courses by

science teachers? Answers to these and other questions were sought recently when the Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey *Study of*

TABLE I  
MEAN SCORES OF THE THEORETICAL VALUE FOR  
SCIENCE TEACHERS AND SUBGROUPS BASED ON  
EDUCATION CREDITS EARNED

Group	Mean
Whole Group (N=36)	47.47
19-24 Credits (N=6)	43.50
25-30 Credits (N=3)	47.67
31-36 Credits (N=15)	48.47
37-42 Credits (N=5)	51.80

*Values*<sup>1</sup> was submitted to a random sample of male high-school teachers in Wisconsin, which included a subgroup of thirty-six science teachers.

## *Attitudes of Science Teachers*

The data revealed that the theoretical evaluative attitude was dominant among science teachers.

Table 1 (see above) presents the mean scores of the theoretical value for the whole group and for subgroups based on intervals of six education credits beyond the minimum of eighteen specified for certification by Wisconsin law, intervals usually required by boards of education for units of professional advancement. The mean scores, in increasing rank order, indicated a direct relationship between theoretical evaluative attitude and education credits earned.

<sup>1</sup> Gordon W. Allport, Philip E. Vernon, and Gardner Lindzey, *A Study of Values*. Booklet and manual of directions. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951.)

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The controversy over subject-matter competence v. pedagogical training continues. Recent trends have reflected a higher regard for knowledge of subject matter. But the role of professional training cannot be disregarded. It is essential that teachers know what to teach as well as how best to teach what they teach.*

*This article presents some data on the necessity for some science teachers to expand their professional training in order to develop a more balanced attitude toward science. The author is chairman of the department of secondary education and professor of educational administration, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee campus.*

*Relationship Between Attitude  
and Credits*

Since the measuring instrument is based upon Spranger's *Types of Men*,<sup>2</sup> it was not surprising that the science teachers had a dominant theoretical interest. By definition, the "theoretical man" is one who is interested in the discovery of truth. He looks for identities and differences.

While the differences in mean scores in Table 1 lacked conclusive statistical significance, they permitted some interesting observations. The gradual increase in relative importance of the theoretical attitude among science teachers with the increase in number of education credits earned tended to refute the argument raised sometimes that education courses with their attention on processes caused a decrease of interest in academic content. The increase in theoretical attitude, furthermore, was achieved without aid from other content areas since only three teachers had been enrolled concurrently in other than education courses, one in the 19-24 credit group and two in the 31-36 group.

Further, the mean scores were influenced little by increase in age or experience of the individuals. Science teachers thirty-five years of age or less differed from the older group by .60 in mean scores. Those with five years' experience or less differed from those with more experience by .81. Each of

<sup>2</sup> Eduard Spranger, *Types of Men*. Translated from fifth German edition of *Lebensformen* by Paul J. W. Pigors. Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag. American agent: Stechert-Hafner, Inc., 31 East 10th St., New York 3. (1926)

these differences appeared too small to influence significantly the increase in theoretical attitude with a corresponding increase in professional preparation. Hence, while not on a cause-and-effect basis, the science teacher's theoretical attitude showed a direct relationship to the number of education credits earned.

*Conclusions*

The findings from the study suggested the following tentative conclusions:

1. The dominant attitude of science teachers was theoretical.
2. While cause-and-effect was not proved, there was an increase in theoretical evaluative attitude of science teachers with a corresponding increase in number of education credits earned.

*Implications*

The conclusions suggested the following implications:

1. Science teachers should be encouraged to take advanced work in professional education as one means of developing good attitudes toward science.
2. Professional education programs should be studied in order to identify the elements which foster favorable theoretical attitudes toward science. Do professional education courses encourage the scientific method? Do they emphasize the importance of science through educational aims and objectives?
3. The values of professional education should not be undervalued.



Our task, then, is to reinstate in the public mind the acceptance of our role as specialists; to promote the positive connotations of "professional educator"; to re-establish in our own hands the function of the educational specialist, and to accept the challenge and responsibility inherent in the inevitable resultant decisions.—THORSTEN BERGGREN in *Washington Education*.

# The Conant Report: a Critique

By JOSEPH T. DURHAM

THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL has no counterpart among educational institutions of the world. Whatever else it may be, the American high school is distinctly American.

Modeled after the European secondary schools, the early American high school was exclusive, selective, and aristocratic. However, this country was settled for the most part by people who left Europe to escape political, economic, and religious restrictions. They "brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." As these founders carved the unique design of the American Republic out of the American wilderness, they concurrently fashioned a unique secondary institution which was to become inclusive, adaptable, and democratic. As a result, our high schools are not like the secondary schools in any other country and not like the secondary schools of our past. These adjectives—"inclusive," "adaptable," and "democratic"—are not qualities

which the American high school has fully achieved. We are still trying to achieve them. They did not spring Minerva-like from the head of some pedagogical Zeus in full maturity.

Consequently, in order to understand the history of the American high school and the complexity of the contemporary pattern of the American high school today, we must remember that it is an institution which is still in the process of becoming. As an institution, the American high school is caught up in the crisis culture of our times, evolving toward a secondary school appropriate for modern America.

We have only to contrast the statements of the Committee of Ten and the statements of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education to see that the purposes of secondary education have changed. In 1893, the Committee of Ten under the chairmanship of Charles Eliot stated that the high school should prepare a small segment of American youth for the "duties of life by improving their intellectual ability." Twenty-five years later, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education wrote that "the purpose of democratic education is to develop in each individual the knowledge, interests, ideals, habits, and powers whereby he will find his place and use that place to shape both himself and society towards ever nobler ends." These two statements show that the purposes of secondary education have changed from one of concentrating effort on a small segment of our youth to one of concentrating on *all* American youth. Indeed, as Caswell of Columbia has stated it, the American high school is undergoing a "great reappraisal."

In this period of the "great reappraisal," much has been written and spoken about

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*This article provides a later look at the famous report on the American public high school by James Bryant Conant. So much was written about the report shortly after its publication that it makes sense to review it in later perspective. Informed students of secondary education generally agree that the Conant report is and will continue to be a landmark in sensible appraisal of the great American comprehensive secondary school. Therefore it deserves space and unbiased comment. The author is associate professor of education, Southern University Graduate School, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.*

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the American high school. Without too much difficulty, one can find criticisms and recommendations from admirals, college presidents, college professors of liberal arts, school board members, housewives, and various political and religious organizations. At first a gentle wind, these statements, after the advent of Sputnik, have assumed the force of hurricane winds.

In the midst of all that has been said heretofore about the American high school, still another report has been issued. This report, James Bryant Conant's *The American High School Today*, appeared in January, 1959.

Dr. Conant is no stranger to American education. He is a top-flight chemist in his own right, president emeritus of Harvard University (after a tenure of twenty years), and more recently ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, a post relinquished by him in February of 1957.

The focus of Dr. Conant's study is "the comprehensive high school," which he defines as a school which offers under one administration and under one roof (or series of roofs) secondary education for almost all of the high-school-age children of one town or neighborhood. The decision to concentrate on the comprehensive high school is an expression of Dr. Conant's long-standing belief that the comprehensive high school is the most appropriate secondary school for the training of our citizen-youth. As far back as 1953 in *Education and Liberty*,<sup>1</sup> Conant recommended that "we adhere to the principle of a comprehensive high school with a common core of studies and differentiated special programs, but in so doing we make far more effort to identify the gifted youth and give him or her more rigorous academic training in languages and mathematics." I would agree with Dr. Conant that the comprehensive high school is the kind of secondary institution which is most appropriate to the education of a democratic citizenry. How-

ever, as a student of curriculum I respectfully suggest that Dr. Conant's conception of general education be re-examined. After establishing as one of the objectives of the comprehensive high school that of providing a "general education for all future citizens," Dr. Conant then describes the program of general education he has in mind. Here I am quoting directly from the report (p. 47):

*Recommendation 3: REQUIRED PROGRAMS FOR ALL A. GENERAL EDUCATION.* The requirements for graduation for all students should be as follows:

four years of English, three or four years of social studies—including two years of history (one of which should be American history) and a senior course in American problems or American government—one year of mathematics in the ninth grade (algebra or general mathematics), and at least one year of science in the ninth or tenth grade, which might well be biology or general physical science. By a year, I mean that a course is given five periods a week throughout the academic year or an equivalent amount of time. This academic program for general education involves nine or ten courses with homework to be taken in four years and occupies more than half the time of most students, whatever their elective programs.

The foregoing quotation sets forth Dr. Conant's conception of general education; namely, the idea that general education is a common assignment of subjects to be taken by all students and required for graduation. By thus defining general education, Dr. Conant ignores or chooses to ignore the volumes of data so tediously written by the staffs of the thirty schools which participated in that noble adventure in education, the Eight Year Study, 1932-1940. These thirty schools held a different conception of general education. Their conception was that the lines of subject matter areas should be obliterated and that common experiences provided for all students ought to be gained in "core classes," in which students from various socioeconomic backgrounds and with various levels of ability live and work together on the solu-

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 57.

tion of common personal-social problems. This kind of program extended throughout the secondary period, with a large block of time, ranging from two-thirds to one-third of the school day, being available. Such programs are known as core programs, general education classes, or social living classes. This concept of general education upon which the "core" idea is built is one which says that all youth who are to become citizens of the American society need certain common experiences regardless of their probable vocational or educational future. The commonality of experiences will not be provided by running all students through the gamut of "solid subjects" (which, incidentally, according to Dr. Conant, would involve a nine- or ten-hour school day, exclusive of physical education and extra-class activities) but would be provided by having students consider comprehensive problems of living which draw upon the subject areas as resources where needed.

It is apparent in the pages of *The American High School Today* that Conant is struggling with a dilemma. On the one hand he believes in the comprehensive high school because it is a democratic institution providing education for all American youth; on the other hand, he wants to have a fare of "solid subjects" for all, but realizing that this program is really for the "academically talented," Dr. Conant seeks to resolve the dilemma by proposing (p. 49) that "in the required subjects and those elected by students with a wide range of ability, the students should be grouped according to ability, subject by subject." Still plagued by the necessity for developing social cohesion, Dr. Conant proposes (pp. 74 and 75) (1) that senior high schools have home rooms and (2) that "in the twelfth grade a course on American problems or American government should be required. . . . Each class in this course should be a cross section of the school: the class should be heterogeneously grouped."

In view of the fact that the preservation

of our system of government is dependent upon a cohesive society in which every segment of society has mutual understanding and open channels of communication between and among themselves, it is my opinion that Dr. Conant's conception of general education is untenable for today's high schools.

I am led to believe that Dr. Conant's major concern is with identifying and making optimum provisions for the scholastic success of the intellectually able student. Recommendations such as the establishment of an effective system of counseling, individualized programs, ability grouping, special programs for the "academically talented," a special guidance tutor for groups of "highly gifted students," maintaining an academic inventory, the establishment of prerequisites for advanced academic course, operating summer school not only for repeaters but also for "bright and ambitious students who wish to use the summer to broaden the scope of their elective programs," special science and language courses—all of these recommendations seem to underscore the fact that the high school today should be concerned about the enormous waste of human resources of which we are all guilty when little is done to identify those with abilities and to assist these students to develop their abilities to their fullest extent.

Dr. Conant does not lose sight of the presence of other students who are less academically inclined. He recommends special programs and teachers for slow readers. He recommends (p. 67) a developmental reading program for all students who want "the opportunity to increase reading speed and comprehension." He recommends diversified programs for developing marketable skills such as typing, stenography, the use of business machines, home economics skills, merchandising skills, vocational and agricultural skills. Certainly, I would agree that provisions for the teaching and nurturing of these skills should be made by a comprehensive high school.



Dr. Conant is also concerned with communication skills. He recommends (p. 50) that one-half of the total time allotted to the study of English should be devoted to English composition with each student being required to write "an average of one theme a week." He further recommends that school-wide composition tests be given in each grade. Failure to pass such a test in the eleventh grade would mean that a student "should be required to take a special course in English composition in the twelfth grade."

Since poor English skills are so frequently complained about by English instructors both at the secondary and at the collegiate levels, this recommendation is one that I would endorse.

Like many other educators in America at the present time, Dr. Conant is concerned with the value of the high school diploma. The existence of so many programs in American high schools and the extreme variations of standards for graduation from high schools have combined to reduce the high-school diploma to a mere certificate of attendance. In order to correct this evil, Dr. Conant has proposed (p. 50) that "each student should be given a durable record of the courses studied in four years and the grades obtained. The existence of such a record should be well publicized so that employers ask for it rather than merely relying on a diploma. . . . The record might be a card that could be carried in a wallet."

Improving the quality of academic work done in the high schools of our country is a persistent theme throughout the Conant report. Dr. Conant frankly admits his belief that 21,000 high schools in America are more secondary schools than we as a nation need. He regards any high school as too small for economical operation which has a graduating class of less than one hundred students. Using the size of the graduating class as a yardstick, Dr. Conant believes that at present we need only 9,000 secondary schools in the nation. By drastically

reducing the number of high schools from 21,000 to 9,000 Conant envisions the improvement of secondary instruction. More effective utilization of staff personnel will ensue; teacher shortages in critical areas like chemistry and physics will be virtually eliminated; and citizen committees concerned with the state action to improve the high schools will have a manageable number of high schools with which to work.

While I would agree that these stated results are desirable, I would still contend that the arbitrary use of a measure such as the number of students in the annual graduating class ignores the personal qualities which also contribute to excellence in education. I am apprehensive that if suddenly in America we should be bereft of 12,000 secondary schools, the personal equation in teaching would be seriously impaired, if not totally lost. It would seem that the 9,000 remaining high schools would be such giant academic communities that the personal influence of the good teacher would be drastically reduced. It may still be that, at least in some subject areas, good teaching takes place with "Mark Hopkins on one end of the log and the student at the other."

We may all agree with Conant's insistence on concerted community action in order to achieve excellence in secondary education. He urges communities of the country to recognize that there are local conditions which will cause their schools to be different from those of adjoining communities. He urges them, further (p. 96) to elect a good school board and to support "the efforts of the board to improve the schools."

The title of Dr. Conant's book, *The American High School Today*, somewhat prepares the reader to expect a survey of the entire system of American secondary education. Obviously, such an undertaking cannot be done by one person within the scope of 140 pages. Moreover, Dr. Conant has included in his study only 103

schools located in 26 states. "These schools were located for the most part outside metropolitan areas in cities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000" (p. 14). I suggest, then, that the Conant report might be appropriately subtitled, "A Study of Selected Comprehensive High Schools."

It seems to me that the chief value of the report lies in the recommendations which it makes for improving the quality of secondary education, within the traditional framework of subjects, for those students who may be termed the "academically talented." The report does not contain any earth-shaking recommendations. Its contents can be used to justify the continuance of the *status quo* in American secondary education. It is my view that we should consider Dr. Conant's report as the

answer of one man who has been involved in the search for that American secondary institution which will be appropriate for youth in the dynamic culture which is American. This is a search which we have pursued for the last three hundred years. To paraphrase Rudyard Kipling, I predict:

When the tumult and the shouting dies,  
When the admirals and the college professors depart.

that search will still be going on. Nineteen years ago, while he was president of Harvard University, Dr. Conant wrote, "The American school system is a vast engine which we are only beginning to understand. We are learning only slowly how to operate it for the public good."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> James B. Conant, "Education for a Classless Society," *Atlantic Monthly*, 165: 600 (May, 1940).



## Why 180 Days of School?

By DAVID S. SARNER

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Recently, in one of my introductory courses, a student asked why the regulation school year was approximately 180 days in length. Without thinking, I started to say that this was according to law, but then I too began to wonder for I could think of no logical scientific answer based upon research findings. The more I thought about the answer, the more I became convinced that the American education system just arrived at 180 days through a process of elimination and simple arithmetic.

If we start with 365 days in the year and subtract Saturdays and Sundays for the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, September, October, November, and December, we find that this comes to 39 Saturdays and 37 Sundays for a total of 76 days. Three hundred sixty-five days less 76 Saturdays and Sundays leaves 289 days. Now subtracting 74 days for summer vacation (approximately from June 20 to September 3), we have a remainder of 215 days. But we must now remember to subtract 14 days for Christmas and seven days for Easter, which now leaves us 194 days. From the remaining 194 days we must now take away

the week (7 days) for the Thanksgiving holiday, leaving 187 days. Then along comes Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, teachers' conferences (total three days) and we find that our original 365 days now have shrunk to 182 days for the school year.

Perhaps it is time to reconsider the school calendar on a more scientific basis. Would it be more advisable to start some studies to determine the number of hours per day and days per school year necessary to teach school subjects to our youth?

Perhaps now that the eyes of the American public are focused upon their schools and the voter is willing to go along with recommendations for improvement, education should consider a re-evaluation of the time allotted to teaching subjects. Here it might be well to reconsider the length of the school year as well as the length of the class period (set up by the college-dominated Carnegie Foundation).

It is regrettable that, in this enlightened mid-twentieth century, education cannot defend the position it has assumed in regard to the length of the school year.

## Book Reviews

FORREST A. IRWIN, *Book Review Editor*

*Administration of the Noninstructional Personnel and Services* by WILLIAM A. YEAGER. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959. 426 pages, \$5.50.

The late Dr. Yeager's final book is an excellent testimonial to a great educator. It fills a need for school administrators in an area which is expanding rapidly in the public schools of the United States, that of noninstructional personnel. It is of particular value to the lay public and to members of boards of education who are often unaware of the vast, complex area of school administration outside of that which deals with pupils, teachers, and administrators. To a greater degree than ever, the modern school administrator must exert leadership over a growing body of personnel whose duties are outside of the classroom proper but who are very necessary to complete the pattern as a whole if the school is to be operated efficiently and co-operatively.

The author points out in the introductory chapter the nature and classification of the non-instructional personnel, focusing the attention of the reader on the importance of recognizing the value of services, other than instructional, which are essential in the American public school system. He emphasizes strongly, however, that the core of all administration should be the instructional program. He further concerns himself with the board of education at the state and local levels, pointing out the legal theory pertaining to the establishment and organization of the American public school, the nature of the organization, the place and function of the state and its authority, and the place and function of the local school districts.

Six areas of noninstructional personnel are then identified: (1) the business and secretarial (clerical) services; (2) the school-plant planning, construction, operation, and maintenance services; (3) the attendance service; (4) the health services; (5) the food service; (6) the pupil transportation service. A final chapter is included on the role of educational leadership in administering the schools, with special emphasis on the noninstructional personnel and services.

Although this is a text primarily for school administrators, it may be recommended highly for teachers and prospective teachers, college

instructors of courses in school administration, and for the lay citizen who wishes to gain a better understanding of the operation of a complex enterprise which forms the basis, to a high degree, of our democratic society.

CHARLES S. LOFTON

*General Business for Today and Tomorrow* by JOHN W. ABERLE, THEODORE J. SIELAFF, and FORREST L. MAYER. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 467 pages, \$3.60.

This new text designed for ninth- and tenth-grade students, has many admirable qualities. Most important is its successful blending of the three factors which are—or should be—the very essence of constructive education. In the first place, each chapter contains a clear-cut, concise explanation of the factual material, or subject matter, under discussion. Secondly, each chapter—and, in fact, sections of each chapter—require the student to improve his abilities in the three R's . . . "readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic." Far too often in this era which overemphasizes the doctrines and dogmas of progressive education, the need to acquire proficiency in these essential skills is overlooked.

Finally, the authors provide provocative problems designed to inspire the young learner to utilize and apply his factual data; and this is a step frequently neglected at all stages of our system of education. The authors state in the preface to the book that one of their objectives is "to teach students to think while reading, writing, speaking, and computing." This approach is an admirable one, and the authors go far in motivating their readers toward attaining this objective.

Of course, my prejudices may be showing here for I have always been a strong advocate of the case method of instruction at all levels of study. However, to be perfectly fair, I must warn the teacher who decides to use this book, even though it involves the modified case method, that a greater burden is thereby placed upon him. This burden consists of greater preparation, more intelligent classroom instruction, and testing which is more difficult both to prepare and to grade. But I feel that these increased demands on an already "overdemanded" teacher are well worth the effort. By the end of

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the course, the good teacher will realize that he has succeeded in making the "triple play"—inculcating practical knowledge, improving the student's ability to communicate, and (most important) training the student to apply facts intelligently to problem situations. The attainment of such goals will serve the student in good stead in his future educational endeavors as well as in his personal and business life during years to come.

The content of the book is, essentially, aptly stated in the title of the first of its fourteen units, namely, "General Business for Personal Use." But the text is not meant exclusively for a course in personal business. Part of the material offers the student a degree of insight into the complex world of business economics. Even in these instances, however, there is an intelligent tie-in between such over-all business economic concepts and the personal business concepts of the individual.

Another point very much in the book's favor is that the material is presented and written in a way which should appeal to the age group for which it is intended. The authors do not write beyond the comprehension of ninth and tenth graders but—even more important—the youngsters are not regarded as grade-school children

either. The authors meet their prospective readers at their own level and then make a rather successful attempt to carry them a little farther up the ladder of true learning.

The subject matter of the book is quite difficult because it is so all encompassing. Naturally, some teachers will feel that certain areas are incorrectly omitted while others will feel that some areas have been emphasized unduly. In my personal opinion, the authors have done a fine job. And the job is especially well done in its efforts to motivate the students. That, after all, is *the* important goal.

STERLING SURREY

*All Around America* (Grade 8 "America Reads" series) by ROBERT C. POOLEY, ALFRED H. GROMMON, and EDYTHE DANIEL. Chicago 11: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1959. 576 pages, \$3.76. Record to accompany book, \$5.50.

Here is a book which should be a delight to both teacher and student. Its cover is colorful yet with a practical dark background which should preserve its handsome appearance for many semesters' use. Its pleasing typography is set double column on 7-by-9-inch pages. Illustrations and photographs (many of which are

full page in full color are exciting and excellent in respect to both composition and reproduction.

The well-chosen selections provide fine opportunity to develop breadth of reading interest and appreciation. Selections ranging from those by the masters of our literary heritage—London, Tennyson, Dickens, Tolstoi, Frost, Kipling, and Shakespeare, to mention but a few—to selections by Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower on World War II, the development of the Salk vaccine, and the atomic age provide for a fine range of interest, time, type, and style.

Each selection, whether prose or poetry, is prefaced by a short thought-provoking purpose for reading. Following each selection is a brief bit of information about the author plus exercises dealing with vocabulary and various reading skills appropriate for that selection. In addition, a list of books ranked on a three-level difficulty scale is provided as a guide to further reading on the same subject.

Following each of the book's eight basic units is an annotated list of approximately twenty additional books, a summary vocabulary exercise, plus exercises designed to develop and strengthen at least two additional reading skills, such as main ideas, seeing relationships, recognizing mood, or visualizing character. Such exercises are typical of the emphasis throughout the book on the development of interpretive reading skills.

A "Complete Pronunciation Key" accompanies an extensive glossary, the page format and content of which are identical to that of a regular dictionary. Three useful indexes are included—"Index of Skills," "Index of Authors and Titles," and "Index of Types of Literature."

An additional feature to assist in development of listening and oral interpretive skills is an LP record, "America Listens," containing fifteen excellently read selections from the book.

LEONARD S. BRAAM

*Sociometry in the Classroom* by NORMAN E. GRONLUND. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959. 340 pages, \$4.50.

Professor Gronlund presents a fresh approach to uses of the sociometric technique as a tool to teaching. Teachers will enjoy the fact that this book is good reading as well as informative from the standpoint of background, understanding, and viewpoint. The book is challenging in approach. Of perhaps more importance is the "how," "when," and "why" discussion of this

part of the responsibility of the school. The viewpoint is well presented from both the theoretical and practical approach.

The author points out that the sociogram is not a cure-all for any of the ills of the classroom. The point is well taken that this is only one of many techniques which the effective teacher may use. The sociogram is perhaps used more effectively by the experienced than by the inexperienced teacher, but either will find some usable suggestions here. Of particular interest to the reviewer is the use of the "likes" rather than "dislikes" of children in the development of the sociogram. Statistical analyses and tables in the book will be of value to those who are interested in some positive use of the end result of this reading.

WYLIE H. RUSSELL

*The Growth of America* by REBEKAH R. LIEBMAN and GERTRUDE A. YOUNG. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 469 pages. \$4.68.

Outstanding features in this new junior-high-school history include: informality of address, very simple vocabulary, story presentation, clear-cut content maps, pleasing color, illustrations from many authentic sources, challenging pupil activities, the use of numerous anecdotes not usually found in junior-high-school history texts; evidence of the purpose of the authors to develop within young America a pride in their heritage, and to challenge them to maintain in the United States and in the world "the idea upon which our country was founded—the belief in human rights."

On first glance at the contents, which lists ten units, one notices the continuing use of the personal pronouns, "we," "our," "us," obviously aimed at enlisting junior-high boys and girls in a co-operative study of their country. A story form of presentation, expressed in an easy (for junior-high) vocabulary is used throughout.

One is kept aware of geographic influences through the frequent occurrence of well-planned maps, presented in attractive color.

The illustrations consist chiefly of reproductions from authentic historical collections in museums, government agencies, industries, business houses, national and state archives. Many are contemporary; others are selections from historic documents. Because of their age some of each did not reproduce clearly. Effective use is also made of reprints of pages from historically pertinent issues of well-known newspapers.

Supplementing the informality in address and style are startling headings introducing the



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unit tests and activities. Although they do echo the spirit of the times, they frequently might be termed slang; for example, "It's Roundup Time," "Strike It Rich," "Fence These In," "Ready, Aim, Fire," "Ride 'em Cowboy." (This might be difficult to defend in a "core" situation.)

Another feature with guaranteed teen-age appeal is the inclusion of numerous anecdotes which are not usually found in an eighth-grade history (as mentioned above). Among these are: Cornwallis' premature packing; Madison's keeping hidden for fifty years his account of the Constitutional Convention (written in his own style of shorthand); General Lee's lost copy of Special Order #191; Uncle Remus.

Obviously, considering the residence of *all* the authors, the amount of space given to Confederate leaders and the Confederacy, treatment of the Constitutional amendments (especially 13, 14, 15), the detail given to the Civil War, this text is primarily intended for schools in the South. However, from the end of the Civil War the book moves on rapidly to develop knowledge of, pride in, and dedication to the United States as a leader in world affairs.

VIRGINIA E. LEWIS

"English Skills" series, Grades 9, 10, 11, 12, by J. N. Hook, FLORENCE C. GUILD, and ROBERT L. STEVENS. Grade 9 (\$3.60); Grade 10 (\$3.68); Grade 11 (\$3.76); Grade 12 (\$3.92); with accompanying workbooks, tests, teachers' handbooks, and keys. New York: Ginn and Co., 1959.

In our age of devastating criticism it is well that this new series of English textbooks should be concise, accurate, and clear. The goals are simply and definitely stated for the student and the teacher. The authors, knowing the value of time for an English teacher, have planned exercises and tests for the student in order to release her for "individual needs."

The "Contents" indicate the spiral principle of development. The first three books begin with emphasis upon human relationships. "Getting Along with People," "Courtesy in Everyday Situations," and "Considering Others" are interesting and practical suggestions for social adjustment, appealing not only to self-interest but also to decent citizenship. Most of the other chapters offer English study for better communication, service to others, and personality growth.

Because of these objectives, effective speech is stressed. Voice training, correct pronuncia-

tion, and accurate use of words are the subjects of several chapters in the first two years and required principles in the last two.

The business-letter sections include orders, adjustments, and applications, presenting the need for exact, courteous, and clear communications. Likewise the problems of social correspondence, formal and informal, are presented for study. Another vital part of composition is sentence structure. That and paragraph development follow a logical, interesting plan. A color picture of a broken train (ninth grade) illustrates the importance of good connections, while a color picture of the compression of metal suggests précis writing. Most oral and written projects are made graphic with color. Finally, one commends the report work for younger students and the research theme for those older.

Grammar sections will satisfy most grammar fans. The workbooks are prolific in problems of usage. Each one deals with spelling and punctuation. Correct use of pronouns in "9" is followed by *why's* in "10." Variety in sentence structure and effective use of verbals are important in "11." "Verbals—a Challenging Subject" is found in every one of the series. Different colors aid the diagram to separate the subject from the predicate. In fact, the books are comprehensive and carefully edited.

MATTIE SHARP BREWER

## Pamphlets Received

PAMPHLETS RECEIVED FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, Washington 25, D.C.:

*Curriculum Responsibilities of State Departments of Education* by HOWARD H. CUMMINGS and HELEN K. MACKINTOSH. Miscellaneous No. 30, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. 76 pages, 55 cents.

*Fall 1958 Statistics on Enrollment, Teachers, and Schoolhousing in Full-time Public Elementary and Secondary Day Schools* by SAMUEL SCHLOSS and CAROL JOY HOBSON. Circular No. 551, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1959. 18 pages, 20 cents.

*Financing Public School Facilities* by CLAYTON D. HUTCHINS and ELMER C. DEERING. Miscellaneous No. 32, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1959. 214 pages, \$1.50.

*Guide to National Defense Education Act of 1958* by THEODORE E. CARLSON. Circular No.

553, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1959. 32 pages, 30 cents.

*Japan—Three Epochs of Modern Education* by RONALD S. ANDERSON. Bulletin 1959, No. 11, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. 219 pages, \$1.25.

*State School Legislation 1957* by ARCH K. STEINER. Bulletin 1959, No. 10, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. 189 pages, 70 cents.

PAMPHLETS RECEIVED FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK (Publication Sales Office, 110 Livingston St., Brooklyn 1):

*Materials for the Literature Program, Grades 1-6*, Curriculum Bulletin No. 7, 1956-57 series. 131 pages, 75 cents.

*Resource Units for Classes with Puerto Rican Pupils* (Secondary School Extended Orientation Stage), 1957. 155 pages, 75 cents.

*Science, Grades K-6. 1. Magnetism and Electricity*, Curriculum Bulletin No. 22, 1958-59 series. 39 pages, 50 cents.

*Science, Grades K-6. 2. Earth in Space*, Curriculum Bulletin No. 23, 1958-59 series. 55 pages, 50 cents.

*Scope and Sequence for Vocational High Schools* (Shop and Related Subjects), Curriculum Bulletin No. 12, 1954-55 series. 105 pages, 90 cents.

## Who's Who Among Our Reviewers

Dr. Braam is assistant professor in the School of Education at Syracuse University, New York.

Miss Brewer, who has retired as a teacher of English in order to do professional writing, is a resident of Austin, Texas.

Miss Lewis is a teacher of social studies in Beverly Hills Junior High School, Huntington, West Virginia. Her writings include the Cabell County Sesquicentennial History and the article on West Virginia in the *Britannica Junior*.

Mr. Lofton is principal of Dunbar High School, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Russell is associate professor in the department of education, the American University, Washington, D.C. He is a former high-school and junior-high-school principal and the author of *Education for Reality* (1959).

Dr. Surrey is professor and chairman of the division of business, Northwest Missouri State College, Maryville, Missouri.

# ➤ The Humanities Today ➤

Associate Editor: HENRY B. MALONEY

## POEMS FOR STUDY

### INVICTUS

By WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeoning of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.  
I am the master of my fate;  
I am the captain of my soul.

(I think it is usually efficient to begin the study of a short poem in class by reading it aloud, or sometimes I ask the students to read it to themselves as they would in an examination; then I ask them *all* to answer in writing a few questions which can be answered very briefly. This procedure gives room for differences of opinion, but its real advantage is that it compels everyone to think at least a little. Assuring them that there are no absolutely right answers. I give them the answers that I would give. I then point out, in the most agreeable possible way, that while there are no right answers, mine are probably "righter" than theirs, on the general principle that I am older and wiser than they are. When you make this assertion, you smile, thereby tricking them into at least a temporary acceptance.)

I suggest that one might begin the study of the famous or notorious poem above with a few questions like the following: (a) Is the image in line 2 a precise one? (b) Is the "speaker" in the poem religious in the usual sense? Religious at all? (c) Is the poem finally optimistic or pessimistic? (d) If he is under the bludgeoning of chance, how can he be the master of his fate? (e) Is the whole thing rather offensive in its tone of "unflinching valiancy"? These questions

will get things started, as would a dozen others that may occur to the teacher.

I begin with a consideration of the last question proposed above. John Ciardi says that this is "perhaps the most widely known bad poem in English," and he accounts for its badness by talking about its "chest-thumping heroics" and its offensive tone. "The reader cannot help but find him [Henley—or the 'speaker'] merely inflated and self-dramatizing."<sup>1</sup> Now, first of all, most readers (Mr. Ciardi would say, I suppose correctly, that most readers are bad readers) have not found the tone objectionable, and a number of readers who have taste do not find this defect in the poem. What the "I" of the poem has said is: "I have been through some very severe ordeals, and though I have found this world a place of wrath and tears and I have no expectation of a better world to come, I am not yet beaten or afraid and I am still in control of my own destiny." I do not find this boastful or chest thumping—I think the real trouble is that it's not very convincing, to which point I will return in a moment. I think these sentiments coming from Henley are touching. It is common knowledge that he took some awful beatings from fate, and that from time to time it is almost literally true that his head was bloody. And I *do not think* that it is in any way improper or illicit to read the poem in the light of this knowledge. When Browning says, "I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more . . ." that's when one scents a phony bravado. There is no evidence that Browning ever fought anything—not so much as a cold in the head.

The principal reason for the great popularity of the poem, of course, is that it is an epigrammatic expression of a defiant and courageous human spirit in the face of every adversity, speaking out of the direst skepticism.

The major fault of *Invictus* is not in its "great roaring rhetoric," but in its inability to withstand examination as an attitude toward life—and certainly no one would deny that that is what Henley is trying to express. There is an irreparable irreconcilability between the admission that one is subject to the bludgeoning of chance and accident and the categorical as-

<sup>1</sup> John Ciardi, *How Does a Poem Mean?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), p. 848.

sertion that one is the master of one's fate. How can one say: *It makes no difference how difficult the struggle may be, or how many "punishments" my experience will impose upon me, I am still in control of my destiny?*

This troublesome logic does not bother the casual reader who carries away a general impression of a splendidly courageous chap whose chin is always up, no matter where the chips are falling. But the close reader is bothered, and especially, I think, with Henley's use of that always difficult word "soul." The poem explicitly denies that there is any immortal part in us, and makes it clear that after a miserable sojourn in this place of wrath and tears we have only in prospect the horror of the shade, so he does not mean that immortal ingredient to which religious persons refer. What is this "unconquerable" element of which he is "captain"? The "spirit" of man? Man's "will"? This is about as well as we can do, and in the light of the context perhaps it is enough. Henley's general intent is reasonably plain—no matter how tough things may get, I will not yield in spirit. I will be Promethean and defy whatever gods may be. . . . Very well, but do not contend in the same breath that you are master.

Henley has confused many cursory readers by the religious tendency of his imagery. The insistence on "soul," the reference to the "strait gate" and the punishments in the "scroll" are Biblically associated in most minds, rightly or wrongly, and so we get a mixture of pagan defiance and scriptural metaphor which leads to a blurred impression. Perhaps we ought to blame the reader and not Henley for this. The poem, I know from experience, has been quite perversely used in the pulpit.

To return to the problem of "tone." The importance of this is primary, and unfortunately, the final determination of it is impossible, at least in this instance. Mr. Ciardi says that one is not moved by the poem, but simply refuses to believe it. I take a directly contrary view. I believe it wholly—that is, I believe in the feeling behind the utterance. I think this poem came out of experience, that it is "felt thought" in the best sense, and if I am ready to go along with Mr. Ciardi that "there is no trace in it of a technical flaw," I would have to assert that it is not only widely known but that it deserves its repute. I think most readers have responded to the genuineness of the poem, but have failed to note its whopping illogicality. It is more "felt" than "thought."

WILLIAM ROSS CLARK  
University of Connecticut

## TV & NEWER MEDIA

### *Oliver Twist*

Du Pont's "Show of the Month," which thus far has shown a fine knack for converting novels into ninety-minute teleplays, will place *Oliver Twist* in the converter Friday, December 4 (C.B.S.-TV, 7:30-9:00 N.Y.T.).

Written over a hundred years ago when both readers and writers enjoyed a more leisurely pace, *Oliver Twist* is that rare blend of comedy and pathos that few authors achieve. By maintaining a detached attitude toward his characters (in keeping with the Henry Fielding tradition), Dickens is able to inject humorous "business" into the novel at serious moments.

Consider poor, starving Oliver, who having just finished his short ration of gruel, makes his way to the front of the kitchen in the poorhouse.

"Please, sir, I want some more."

"The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

"What!" said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

"The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said:

"Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!"

Given a choice of hyperbole and pathos, Dickens chooses the witty path. And in a sense he must. For he is too much the professional storyteller to allow the nigh-perfect Oliver—a frighteningly good character for an author to have to deal with—to get involved in any more sentimental claptrap than necessary.

Actually, the line that separates Master Oliver from the nice nice-goody goody lad that we can't help wishing a few mud splatterings to is a thin one. Oliver's saving grace lies in Dickens' comic treatment of some pathetic situations and in Oliver's being a passive character. He is constantly warding off evil, but he is called upon to perform few noble acts. He is rarely in the foreground long enough to parade his goodness.

In his preface to the novel, Dickens reveals that he intends to portray the criminals as unappealing, thoroughly despicable, characters. And yet, his tongue-in-cheek style betrays him.

Does he actually succeed in making Fagin a hateful character until near the end of the book when the arch-criminal's underworld begins to tumble around him?

Teachers will inevitably make comparisons with the 1951 movie version in which Robert Newton played Sikes and Sir Alec Guinness played Fagin as though the roles had been written specifically for them.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS

(1) Is Oliver the hero, the main character, or neither?

(2) What major coincidences occur in the story?

(3) Who is the most comic character and what precisely makes him funny?

(4) Does *Oliver Twist* support or refute the saying, "There is no honor among thieves"?

(5) Discuss Mr. Bumble's outraged comment when he learns that he is legally responsible for his wife's transgressions. "If the law supposes that . . . the law is a ass—a idiot. If that's the eye of the law, the law's a bachelor; and the worst I wish the law is, that his eye may be opened by experience—by experience."

(6) Who is the more evil character, Sikes or Fagin?

(7) Who are some contemporary social and political reformers who use fiction as a sounding board for their philosophies?

(8) Who were the "muckrakers"?

(9) Trace the development of child labor laws. What are the work restrictions regarding minors today?

H.B.M.

## IN PRINT

### *Ruminations of an Editor*

*The Waist-High Culture* by THOMAS GRIFFITH.

New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959. 275 pages, \$4.00.

The title, jacket blurb, and review of this book would imply that Thomas Griffith has written a sustained analysis of contemporary American culture. That he has not done: The tone and much of the material are autobiographical; many major aspects of culture are slighted (e.g., religion and education); random excursions into the byways of foreign travel intrude.

This is, instead, the ruminations of a widely experienced *Time* editor on contemporary life as he has lived it. Since his experience ranges

from childhood in a pinched boardinghouse to police reporting for the *Seattle Times*, to various editing jobs on *Time*, his commentary also ranges over the whole vast field of modern values and ideas. He rides herd on such disparate signs of the times as fragmented man, the celebration of the celebrity, and our poverty of plenty. All these and other loco manifestations of modern culture he lassos with two theories of American civilization: We misconstrue the meaning of equality; the profitable middle dictates the level of discourse and taste. This tidy corraling is not the best of the book, however. Others (several essays in *Mass Culture*, for example) have done more systematic and convincing analyses and "mass man" is nearly stampeded by social scientists.

The real merit of the book is in its moments around the campfire when the cow poke draws on his personal experience for his generalizations about life. Even in the passages most dangerously close to sketches of "The Most Unforgettable Character I Have Met," Griffith usually maintains a relevance to his larger discussion.

Thus his reminiscences of several *Time* executives upset some images of the editor-as-monster that are current among even sophisticated critics of that magazine. If he occasionally slips into the late-night mood of "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie," he compensates with some clear-eyed remarks on the short-comings of the UN (constitutionally committed to the *status quo*), the unhealthy immunity granted business in the news, and the popular but misguided idea that the government is too full of plans (actually it is too involved in protecting others' plans). Criticisms, by the way, sufficient in themselves to upset the liberal's stereotype of the *Time*-server.

The frequency of these asides and their insight into the complexity of modern journalism guarantee the value of the book. The reader feels, however, that it is less valuable as an original guide to American culture. And when Griffith begins taking pot shots at modern art, literature, and the "elite" in America in his concluding pages, he is at least vague and possibly uninformed.

His criticism seems to be motivated by the very same tyranny of equality that he has earlier disavowed in American society. One wishes, too, that he would more carefully identify this "elite"—what is Buddha to the Villager is bum to the Rotarian.

MARY E. HAZARD  
Levittown, Pennsylvania



# Audio-Visual News

## New Films

*The following thirty-six films were all entries at the American Film Festival (April 1959) sponsored by the Educational Film Library Association, 250 W. 57th St., New York, 19, New York. Although not award winning, they all are of merit and will be found useful in the classroom.*

**AUDUBON AND THE BIRDS OF AMERICA:** 16 mins., black and white or color, Coronet Films, Chicago.

The life and works of John James Audubon. The film recreates his youth, his struggles with business failures, his interest in painting wildlife, and his decision to spend his life following this desire. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**LIFE AMONG THE PENGUINS:** 20 mins., black and white, Brandon Films, New York City.

The story of the Imperial penguins living on the ice crust near the South Pole. A colony selects mates, swims, slides, skates, hatches eggs, protecting them from cold by placing them on the pads of their feet. (Jr. High)

**A WAY OF LIFE:** 27 mins., color, Missouri Conservation Commission, Jefferson City.

The story of predation, the law of nature. (Sr. High)

**BASEBALL PITCHING:** 13 mins., color, Films for Education, Audio Lane, New Haven, Conn.

One of a series of eight on the fundamental techniques of baseball. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**DANCE YOUR WAY:** 10 mins., color, Department of Visual Communication, University of California Extension, Los Angeles.

Boys and girls learn how easy it is to catch the rhythm and dance to music. Everyone is having fun. (Jr. High)

**THE MELBOURNE OLYMPIC GAMES:** 23 mins., color, distributed by Coca-Cola Co.

A description of the colorful Olympic games. Suggests that sports may help to build up international good will. (Sr. High)

**1958 MILLER OPEN:** 29 mins., color, distributed by Miller Brewing Co., Milwaukee, Wis.

A golf film, showing close-ups and outstanding golf shots of the professionals who played in the 1958 tournament. (Sr. High)

**PRIDE OF THE BRAVES:** 29 mins., color, distributed by Miller Brewing Co., Milwaukee, Wis.

Highlights of the Milwaukee Braves and their star pitcher, Warren Spahn. Starting with spring training and continuing through some of the crucial games of the season, it concludes with part of the World Series. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**TROUBLE SHOOTING WITH PAUL HARNEY:** 16 mins., color, distributed by Miller Brewing Co., Milwaukee, Wis.

The tough shots of a golfer—up and down hill, lie, hook and slice, chip shots—all are shown by a professional golfer. (Sr. High)

**EARTHWORMS:** 11 mins., color, Pat Dowling Pictures, Los Angeles.

Earthworms in their underground homes eat their way through the earth. Animation and X-ray type scenes explain the digestive tract. How earthworm castings and earthworm tunnels enrich and aerate the soil. (Sr. High)

**TREASURES OF THE EARTH:** 11 mins., black and white or color, Churchill-Wexler Film Productions, Los Angeles.

A visualized presentation by animation of ways in which minerals have been deposited in the earth. Changes in the earth's crust, deposits in veins, washing into stream beds, or seeping through the earth in solution cause concentration of minerals. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**CHLORINE: A REPRESENTATIVE HALOGEN:** 16 mins., color, distributed by Classroom Film Distributors, Inc., Los Angeles.

The study of chlorine—general information, preparation, physical and chemical properties, reactions with other elements and compounds, uses of chlorine, and opportunities for chlorine research. Many demonstrations are shown that are difficult to do in the typical high-school laboratory. (Sr. High)

**COMBUSTION:** 14 mins., color, distributed by Classroom Film Distributors, Los Angeles.

The fire triangle is used to visualize conditions necessary for combustion, factors in rate of combustion, the spontaneous combustion. Partial and complete combustion are explained. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**LIFE OF THE MOLDS:** 22 mins., color, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York City.

Examples of harmful and beneficial activities are shown. It shows the vegetative structure of molds, asexual reproduction, sexual reproduction, disease, decay, and recycling. (Sr. High)

**RHYTHMIC MOTIONS OF GROWING PLANTS:** 11 mins., color, William Harlow, 115 Terrace Rd., Syracuse, N.Y.

Circumnutation, the basic waving or nodding motion of growing plants, is featured. Also shown are the effects of gravity and light upon plants, and the "sleep motions" of leaves, sweeping motions of morning glory vine, and tendril action of wild cucumber. Time lapse photography is used. (Sr. High)

**COUNTRY OF ISLAM:** 16 mins., color, distributed by Churchill-Wexler Film Productions, Los Angeles.

Mustafa, a Moslem boy, leaves his native village to seek an education in the city. The people and scenes along the road are new and exciting experiences. In the city he is accepted at a school and makes new friends. Depicts the customs, religion, and economy of contemporary Morocco. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**FAMILY OF GHANA:** 29 mins., black and white, distributed by McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York City.

A story of village life on the coast of Ghana, newly independent country of west Africa. The people of the village are fishermen, fishing with a net owned by the headman, who gets half the catch.

One of the young men travels to a larger village where he sees a fishing boat which could bring a bigger catch to his village and which becomes a symbol of a near future. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**MARCEL MARCEAU'S "THE OVERCOAT":** 35 mins., distributed by Brandon Films, New York City.

Marcel Marceau and his company in an original pantomime ballet based on Gogol's "The Overcoat," a story of a poor clerk who saves and scrapes to get an overcoat. (Sr. High)

**MUSIC FROM OIL DRUMS:** 15 mins., black and white. Folkways Records, 117 W. 46th St., New York City.

The folk singer Pete Seeger visits Trinidad and watches the step-by-step production of a steel drum from a discarded oil drum. A young Trinidadian demonstrates the making and playing of the drum, then a band playing different sizes builds melody and harmony. Back in Beacon, N.Y., Seeger teaches school children the technique he has learned. (Sr. High)

**A MILE TO EL DORADO:** 28 mins., color, distributed by Association Films.

In Venezuela, oil is a mile down in the earth under water of the ocean. The use of aluminum in building drilling rigs and in pipes to carry oil is the main theme of the film. (Jr. High)

**THE ART AND BEAUTY OF CASHMERE:** 22 mins., color, Dalton of America, Inc.

The making of cashmere sweaters from the raw cashmere of Himalayan goats through sorting, combing, skeining, and knitting the various parts of the sweater; how the separate knitted pieces are joined with hand-sewn details; how to wash a cashmere sweater correctly. (Sr. High)

**CARONIA WORLD CRUISE:** 27 mins., color, Cunard Steamship Co.

The features of interest in and around the places visited by the *Caronia* on its world cruise: Trinidad and Brazil, Tristan da Cunha and Africa, Zanzibar and the Seychelles, India and Ceylon, Singapore, Thailand and Bali, Manila, Hong Kong and Japan, Hawaii, and Mexico. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**HARVEY'S DILEMMA:** 12 mins., color, distributed by Modern Talking Pictures.

Harvey decides to save one dollar in the Savings and Loan Association in his town. From a mountain top he keeps an eye on his dollar and sees how it provides housing and employment, and contributes to the town's prosperity. (Sr. High)

**DEW LINE:** 27 mins., color, Western Electric Co.

The story of the DEW line operation from beginning to end, describing the enormous difficulties that had to be overcome in making the Arctic radar system a reality. Shows how the United States, with the co-operation of Canada, set up a system of distant early-warning radar stations to stretch three thousand miles from northwest Alaska to eastern Canada. (Sr. High)

**RUBBER FROM OIL:** 31 mins., color, Esso.

The story of the invention, development, and product applications of butyl synthetic rubber; military significance of butyl rubber in World War II; how product application research creates new uses for butyl and results in better products for the consumer. (Sr. High)

**PEOPLE, PROFITS AND YOU:** 26 mins., color, Bureau of Advertising, ANPA.

Explains the relationship of the newspaper to the business and social aspects of the American community. Shows that business and selling are local and must be geared to local interests. Emphasizes that of the various mass media only newspapers can attract, please, and hold people of all interest groups. (Sr. High)

**WINGS TO BRITAIN:** 28 mins., color, Pan-American Airways.

A trip by air to England and Scotland, showing the usual attractions on such a trip. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD:** 13 mins., color, distributed by Association Films.

Shown is the importance of ice to the average family, the process of how ice is made, starting with the compression of liquid ammonia and brine, purification, freezing, to the final end product of crystal-clear ice. (Sr. High)

**ANCIENT ART: MODERN MAGIC:** 10 mins., Glass Container Manufacturers Institute.

Traces the history of glass containers from the discovery of glass by the ancient Phoenicians, through use of it in Egypt, development in Europe, to colonial America and John Smith's "Glass House." Concludes with uses of glass containers in America today. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**FIBERS AND CIVILIZATION:** 28 mins., color, distributed by Modern Talking Pictures.

The pageant of fibers—silk, cotton, linen, and wool—in the history of the early world of Egypt, India, China, and Europe. Continues with modern methods and uses of artificial fibers. (Jr.-Sr. High)

**THE INSPECTOR'S BADGE:** 13 mins., color, Tobin Packing Co., Rochester, N.Y.

How meat packing is done in a well-run plant, what federal inspectors do, how inspection protects the customer, and why a reputable meat packer is pleased to have it done. (Jr. High)

**PROJECT VANGUARD:** 28 mins., color, distributed by Modern Talking Pictures.

The complete story of the International Geophysical Year earth-satellite launching program. (Sr. High)

**WHY SALES MANAGERS GO NUTS:** 10 mins., black and white, Darnell Corp., Chicago.

Light treatment of what happens when effective communication breaks down between the salesman and the sales chief. A sales chief points out what sales reports should include. (Sr. High)

**NEVER ALONE:** 50 mins., black and white, American Cancer Society.

Early examination saves a man's life; another who loses his voice learns to talk again; a new method of detection promises to save thousands of lives. (Sr. High)

**ACCIDENTS DON'T JUST HAPPEN:** 12 mins., color, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

The cause of accidents from emotional, physical, and psychological factors. The needless waste of life and limb through accidents which could usually have been prevented. (Sr. High)

**GIVE A CAR A MAN WHO CAN DRIVE:** 13 mins., Richfield Oil Corp., Los Angeles.

A family car tells its history. The members of its family have violated practically every safe-driving rule. It dreams of the perfect driver owner, and eventually finds one. (Sr. High)

### *Other New Films*

**OUTDOOR FISH COOKERY:** 28 mins., color, free loan, United States Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Age-old and modern out-of-doors fish cookery in the United States. Salmon bake in the Pacific Northwest; Virginia oyster roast; New England clambake; ice fishing and cooking perch in Michigan; mullet smoking in Florida; fish fry in Ohio; shrimp boil in Louisiana; lobster boil in Maine; and a Carolina pine bark stew. (Sr. High)

**SETTLING THE GREAT PLAINS, 1850-1885:** 12 mins., color, McGraw-Hill Textfilms, New York City. Focusing on the 1850-1885 period of westward expansion, the film tells the story of survival in the American Great Plains—the life of the Indians and the coming of white men with their rifles, railroads, and cattle-raising industry. (Jr.-Sr. High)

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